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HER MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS

HANDBOOK

TO THE

FINE ART COLLECTIONS

IN THE

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

OF 1862

BY

FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE

FELLOW OF EXETER COLLEGE OXFORD

—◆—
" Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her
W. WORDSWORTH

—◆—

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1862

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TO

EARL GRANVILLE, K.G.

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL, AND CHAIRMAN OF HER MAJESTY'S
COMMISSIONERS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF 1862

WHILST dedicating this little book, by your kind permission, to your Lordship, I am anxious to state, at once, that although undertaken under the Commissioners' sanction, it contains no judgment for which the writer is not solely responsible. It has been a serious task; unpleasant from the tone of assertion which, in so brief a criticism, is unavoidable without a wearisome repetition of diffidence and qualifying phrases;—in one sense indescribably unpleasant, from the necessity of uniting censure with praise. But having accepted this ungracious judicial function, in the interests of Art I could not honestly do otherwise than express opinions, which I have done my best to form impartially, and to write fearlessly.

I shall hope that the work may prove useful to visitors; but I cannot expect to escape giving temporary annoyance to some sincere but (as it seems to me) mistaken artists. And in this wide region of gain and glory a few counterfeit wares (how should it be otherwise?) have crept in, which in justice to the good men and true, I have felt bound to specify. Especially is this the case in regard to Sculpture: an art to which, it is fair to add, I have given many years' close attention. But no word of dispraise has been admitted without repeated revision, and sincere regret.

Let me conclude with my best thanks for the advice and encouragement which I have received in the general course of my work, from yourself, Mr. Fairbairn, Mr. Sandford, and others,—to whose united thought and industry this Exhibition owes much of its conspicuous splendour.

F. T. P.

COUNCIL-OFFICE ;

APRIL : 1862

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HANDBOOK

TO THE

FINE ART COLLECTIONS



THE ENGLISH SCHOOL OF OIL-PAINTING

READ or not read, a few words of Preface must be given, to tell the plan and principles of this little book. Among spectators in all galleries of art two phrases are constantly heard, that *we know nothing about Painting*, and that *tastes cannot be disputed*. The writer intends here to make war against both of them.

So far as mere information is concerned, very little is needed to understand really good Art. What we want, in fact, is rather to forget than to remember. Let a man come with a true open heart, putting away the fine learned phrases he may have heard and super-subtle reasons for admiring commonplace and charlatanry, and asking himself always, whilst he sees pictures, whether they are like Nature, and when away, which pictures dwell on his memory; and he will soon find the discernment of the good and the less good growing up within him. A temper ready to love and quick to admire, patient in comparison, but firmly holding what is clearly true to Nature, is the sure groundwork for good taste, and he who comes thus, cannot fail so far as he sees, to see truly. It is not meant that experience or time can be dispensed with. The greatness of Art is accurately proportioned to the quantity of the facts, and the force of the thoughts, it conveys: it teaches us by every fresh work whilst it delights us: we are always learning more from it while more admiring it. To be very simple and very subtle at once, is one of the many apparent paradoxes of all Genius: it may bring the message of Angels, but its voice is the downright voice of children. Good Art is straightforward and intelligible in its first

elements to all who bring ears to hear or eyes to see, whilst, like the Nature it imitates, every advance in it which we make opens further avenues to pleasure and admiration.

In truth it is more often obstinate indolence than ignorant humility which says *we know nothing about Art*;—as *tastes cannot be disputed* is generally the next remark, as the spectator who knows nothing passes on to the conviction that he cannot be mistaken in anything. This idle saying, fit for the tasteless race that invented it, is one of the many which govern us by false metaphor. If Judgment or Discernment had been the word we used, no one would have had courage to claim that it could not be reduced to principles, or tried by facts. Even of the strict Tastes, in the purely animal sense of the term, it is scarcely true that they are infallible and indisputable. To judge of the finest wine, for instance, is matter of education: and no healthy person will doubt that, — whatever his inexperienced first liking may be, — he would at last prefer the finest. So of colours: only children in their play have each their favourite: as the common words ‘gaudiness,’ ‘refined tint’ and the like testify to the feeling that taste in colour is matter, not of instinct, but of thought and education. Good Taste is merely sound knowledge: human feebleness and our short life can never carry it to an infallible law, but like any other science, it is open to question, examination, and perpetual reference to the one and only standard, — Nature. By this, right and wrong in Art are tried as surely, as right and wrong in Morality by the standards of conscience and religion. Some points in all will always be doubtful; about many we shall doubt long, whilst we analyze or wait for experience to test them. But the last thing an honest heart and clear intellect could do, would be to retreat within the complacent egotism of *de gustibus non disputandum*, — ‘my taste is indisputable.’

Some points, however, in the Morality of Taste, — for we must use the word, — have been so fairly fixed that they are no more open to rational question than arithmetic. Every Art uses certain means for definite ends. But the final cause, — the end of ends, — in all the Fine Arts is the same: to give noble pleasure. Hence, in forming our taste in any one art, we must first ask if the special means have been truly exercised. And as the special method of each Art is that by which it differs from other arts, it follows that the essential duty of an Oil painter is to Colour well. If he cannot

do this, it is clear he should have taken some other mode of expressing himself; he should have engraved, or drawn in chalk, or modelled; — nay, amongst painters, in Germany especially, we shall find men who have so much thought and story to tell, and so little command of the means of telling, that we may fairly say their vocation was not to Painting, but to Philosophy. People do not like to own this, and hence whenever painters who cannot Colour have flourished, we find a world of subtle theories and learned labour spent to prove that colour is an unimportant or even a degraded and sensual quality: — or perhaps it is settled that all tones are to be kept ‘low’ (which means only in fact, feeble and obscure), or in some other way should deviate from Nature. This doctrine has had its day in Italy and England; and in France it is still popular. But let the spectator remember only as he looks, that the first duty of a painter is — to paint: and the simple truth will enable him to sweep aside these perplexing speculations. They, with a hundred more of the ‘mysteries of the art,’ are only excuses, how not to do it. We may be justly pleased with works which fail more or less in one point, but have other merits. But this must not drive us from our clear first principle. Without true Colour we have no true Painting: — and neither good drawing, nor rapid invention, high thought, or sweetness in feeling, can atone for the absence of it.

With Colour may be placed good management of Light and Shade, which are only Colour in its simplest stage: although under the name of *Chiar’oscuro* this has also been the unfortunate subject of innumerable speculations, entirely profitless to Art, and (like the rest) available only to the idle critic, or the imperfect painter. A natural eye for these qualities is an instinct, which, like other human instincts, differs from those of animals in this, that it may be either lost or refined. To think of Nature is of course the one standard by which spectators should try the colouring of pictures, — bearing but this in mind, that as the lights and darks of Nature immensely surpass those that Art can produce, but the lights more especially, — the painter must always make a compromise between the intensity of his hues compared one with another. Pictures may be roughly divided into three classes in regard to this gradation or scale of tone: I — those where every colour is treated in relation to the rest, so as to gain the greatest general truth of effect; II — those where some relations of tone are carried out cor-

rectly, and the rest sacrificed; III—those in which a subject is chosen admitting of reproduction, more or less complete, by our range of colours. This last is the manner of Rembrandt; the next of the old landscape painters and many of the modern French; the first of Turner, Reynolds, and the really great Colourists of all ages.

The next quality, shared by the Painter with all the arts of Design, Drawing, is so simple; its necessity so clear, and its deficiency perceptible with such comparative readiness, that it requires no discussion. Let us suppose a picture satisfies us in its truth in these two points:—they stand first, because without them the primary or technical conditions of Art are not fulfilled:—yet, looking at it from another point, we know that they are of no value unless put to fit use. What then, makes a good Picture in regard to *Subject*? Colour and Design are the painter's language and style:—what story is he to tell us?

Here again, what the spectator has to do most, is to forget. Put away all ingenious theories on Composition, on High and Low Art, on the Grand Style and the Historical Style,—on Imitation, on the Ideal, on the Beautiful, the Classical, and so many other great Adjectives,—‘clear your head of that cant,’—and remember only that the aim of Art is to give us noble pleasure, and its means of so doing the representing sweet or lofty thoughts by Form and Colour.

I hope the reader will submit to look at the last words twice. It is in the quality of *Thought* that what makes Art emphatically Art, lies. The photograph gives us an Imitation: Nature gives us herself,—a beauty which nothing can reproduce:—but, if it were reproducible, we should still desire something different from either,—something which shall repeat Reality for us coloured by the soul of another human creature. It is the same with a more comprehensive Art; we are indifferent to the bare tale of civil war or domestic struggle;—our interest and our hearts are in such events when they come to us with the vivacity of *Waverley*, or the passion of *Lear*. From the simplest realization of common things to those pictures which are all poetry, if we ask ourselves truly, the same law holds; it is the cottage child as Gainsborough sees him, or the bird's nest as it looks to William Hunt that we value, not less than the Cornish seas as they appear to the sweet fancy of Hook, or the glory of the sunset going down behind the *Téméraire* in the visions of Turner. Nor is this great

human prerogative of Thought confined to the *idea* of the picture : by that law of our nature which binds body and soul in unity, the *mechanical execution*, proportionately to its excellence, is penetrated by the spiritual element. The heart and intellect of a true Artist steal mysteriously into his lines and colours ; they, too, are partakers in 'the Soul, or whatever it is, without which the material frame is inanimate and inexpressive.'

It is on these simple conditions that vitality in art rests : they dispense at once with all the wise trifling and jargon of the schools, and leave us alone with Truth, in her sweet serious simplicity. Let the aim and the work be true : why should philosophers inquire further ?—in proportion to the degree of these things, those who look receive noble pleasure. It is by such easy tests that we are to judge. The highest aim will be that which joins nobleness of subject,—involving 'wide interests and profound passions,' with the fullest statement of fact and the greatest amount of beauty, and expressing all in the most imaginative manner. Thus in the best picture we find always most of the painter's own Soul ; and such work bears with it also another unfailing sign in its thoughtfulness and refinement of Execution. 'The first universal characteristic of all great Art is Tenderness,' remarks one to whom the writer and many of his readers are deeply indebted : 'an infinitude of tenderness is the chief gift of all the truly great men.'* But men's capacities differ : to one is given force of Imagination, to another simple earnestness of statement, to another, perhaps, humorous observation, to a fourth the passion and poetry of common life. The test of all styles is, however, the same,—Sincerity of purpose. The higher the aim, the harder the triumph ; here we must make allowance for human shortcoming, and place even imperfectly executed work, if sincere in its loftiness, above a narrower perfection. But the choice must be sincere : a weak religious picture will rank far below an honest farmyard scene, and all the good intentions and sweet feelings of men like Overbeck or Scheffer or Dobson make us only regret the want of that power and truth without which their works are a laborious mockery. It cannot be too much remembered, that nothing but a great mind can produce a great picture. The greatest Art is that which expresses the widest and truest thoughts : the utterance of the greatest soul. Such will never be common, but we may have true and

* J. Ruskin : *The Two Paths*.

wholesome work from lesser faculties. To quote the same writer again, 'the difference between great and mean art lies, not in definable methods of handling, or styles of representation, or choices of subject, but wholly in the nobleness of the end to which the effort of the painter is addressed. We cannot say that a painter is great because he paints boldly, or paints delicately; because he generalizes or particularizes; because he loves detail, or because he disdains it. He is great if, by any of these means, he has laid open noble truths, or aroused noble emotions. It does not matter whether he toil for months upon a few inches of his canvass, or cover a palace front with colour in a day, so only that it be with a solemn purpose that he has filled his heart with patience, or urged his hand to haste. And it does not matter whether he seeks for his subjects among peasants or nobles, among the heroic or the simple, in courts or in fields, so only that he behold all things with a thirst for beauty, and a hatred of meanness and vice.'

There is no need to add much to these fine words. When the qualities enumerated come together with sincerity, we have true Art: and so clear are the signs of it, that no one who brings the open heart and child's frank acceptance can fail in the first steps towards correct judgment, however inexperienced in pictures.

Methinks I see a quickening in his eye:—

He will find that there is no profound secret in the subject, no rules only of 'taste' and fancy, but a standard of ascertainable right and wrong, falsehood or truth. But he will not the less see, that a thorough judgment on Art is to be won, like all other knowledge, by no royal road except that of honest will and patient endeavour.

Whilst the writer would thus say to his readers, '*look much*,' he would however be not less disposed to say, '*but not at many*.' The eye may not be satisfied with seeing, but the Imagination is quickly wearied by attending; the vast mass of different works which must fill all collections fatigues and blunts the judgment. One good work well studied; one great master, truly understood, will give a hundredfold more pleasure and profit than a glance over a thousand mediocrities. Better not to look at all, than to look only as a means to fill an idle hour with a worse idleness. Men give their lives to Art; it is base to make their toil and endeavour an excuse for transient joke and frivolous fancy. 'Did these bones cost no more the breeding?'—

In this little book I have tried to conform to the plan here suggested. To try to criticize all or many of the works in so vast a collection were useless: I shall therefore in general notice only those which are of real excellence, or important to the story of Art in their respective countries. This, if well carried out, would be nearly sufficient; for great artists are always 'representative men;' their work includes the aims of the smaller, exhibiting what they do with more force and sweetness, and exceeding it by the glorious colour thrown by Genius over all it touches. But it is not only their own Art which such men represent; like Poets, they give back to the age its forms and feelings; they embody national tastes and passions; the mirror they hold up is not so much to Nature, as to Human Nature,—painting Rank in the last century, and Poverty in this, as society shifts its interests; satirical then, sentimental now; and even in the Landscape obedient to modern manners, travelling to Monte Rosa with Turner, or encamped on the shores of the Dead Salt Sea with Hunt. Whilst we chronicle the History of Painting, we are painting the History of nations: for nations, like the cloud of the Poet, 'move altogether, when they move at all:' this large advance carries with it and rules its lesser manifestations:—thus it will be needful to notice a few main events and changes of modern Europe to explain the great underlying laws which have governed the growth of Art. And it is hoped that this plan will be of more interest and value than if the page was filled with the anecdotes which illustrate nothing, or the names and dates that no one can remember.—Criticism on this subject, as on all others, should be expressed (in the writer's opinion) so far as possible in the terms appropriated to the subject itself,—avoiding metaphors and fine philosophical language. Such phrases as 'generalization,' 'idealization,' 'naturalism,' 'objective,' and the like, admit of a certain cautious use when the facts pointed at have been made quite clear; but in general, with the imbecile criticism of pictures by other pictures, in place of reference to Truth and Nature, they are the contrivances by aid of which ignorance tries to mask itself.* Such words, with the absurd 'still-life,' the unmeaning 'genre,' and other technicalities, I shall do my best to shun; and speak throughout, without fear and without favour.

* This rule, however, is not to bar us from occasionally referring to first-rate work, as a kind of standard how much may be legitimately asked of human powers.

LARGE ROOM

THIS Gallery contains what may be roughly called the first century of our Painters in Oil, from 1750 to 1850. Time has more or less fixed the place in art of most Masters here represented, although a few works by men still in their prime have been admitted. The intelligent and harmonious arrangement of the pictures speaks of itself to the skill and taste of Mr. Redgrave and Mr. Creswick, who have been alone responsible for a task, to which (the writer may add) they brought an equal degree of conscientious toil and patience.

One thing that appears to strike foreigners much, in regard to English Art, is the variety and individuality of our painters. They are all unmistakeably English, no doubt: they are generally alike in a certain neglect of figure drawing, and in a certain success in colour:—but they do not show signs of any systematic pursuit of art, they are not like students of any national Academy. Although there is a less favourable side to these characteristics of English Painting, yet on the whole Englishmen will not be disposed to think them unsatisfactory. The best Art is that which best represents the mind of the race, and we may read ourselves as a nation in the independence and vigorous individuality of our artists. But, like other liberties, these have not been gained without a struggle.

We must go back a few centuries to understand how the English school was founded. It differs in one notable point from all other European schools. They have their root more or less in the art of the middle ages, the German and Italian especially: but although England in early days displayed a capacity for the Fine Arts in many directions, especially in those where Colour or Construction are concerned, yet it can hardly be said that the spirit which produced our cathedrals with their admirable decorations in glass and carving, had any direct connection with modern art. In fact after 1500 this early feeling almost died out, and for more than two centuries we were content to take lessons in taste from Germany and Italy. The few English oil painters whom we find were scholars of the foreign artists Holbein, Zuccaro, Vandyke, Rubens, Lely, Kneller, and many others of less note: and they appear to have attempted nothing but Portraiture. Hence at the beginning of

the last century, when wealth and peace began to create a class of buyers, there was an absolute disbelief in the ability of England to produce anything valuable in Art. It was then supposed that this power, by some law of Nature, was confined to Italy: and as for more than a hundred years no one could fail to see that Italy had ceased to produce what was valuable, a variety of learned theories sprang up to justify the bad pictures of the day, and blind Englishmen to the testimony of their own eyes. Art was divided into 'High' and 'Low;' High Art meant painting subjects which the artist had never seen, and had not skill or genius enough to imagine; Low Art was the name for pictures of real life, represented as they actually looked to the artist. A great deal was said about 'generalization' and the 'broad style,' and 'the Ideal' and 'chiaroscuro' and 'the historical manner,' and fifty other phrases, which never occur to any nation whilst Art is in a living state. It took some trouble to learn this ingenious jargon, and hence those who did despised the uninitiated vulgar, and laid down the law for Painting in the high Italian manner as it was practised in the 17th century. And any Artist who ventured to think for himself and follow Nature had to fight his way through criticism and ridicule,—to see the tenth-rate copies of tenth-rate originals bought for great prices by men of taste, —whilst he was happy if he escaped starvation by exchanging works which are now the pride of palaces for a pot of beer, or disposing of them by a shilling auction.—'Look you, Dick,' said a friendly pawnbroker to the earliest English Landscape painter, showing him a heap of his unsold works in the garret, 'you know I wish to oblige, but see, there are all the pictures I have paid you for these three years.'

Not very different from this was the experience of our first national artist, **Hogarth**: (1697-1764.) His sturdy mind rebelled against the eloquent nonsense of the day, and his obstinate self-reliance qualified him well to lead the Reformation in English Art. No man more distinctively and decidedly original and creative—not even Phidias in Athens or Giotto in Florence—ever worked; no one more completely began a new style, and impressed it on his country. To those who do not know the strange limitations under which the human mind lies in every age it will appear almost incredible that, before Hogarth, no one had put a moral into painting, or made it tell anything like a distinct tale of contemporary manners. Yet this is strictly true, and we cannot avoid connecting such works as the splendid series of the *Mariage à-la-Mode*, and the *Rake's Progress*,

with the fact that precisely at the same time the modern Novel began with Richardson and Fielding. It is a fair subject of pride that these two great inventions in art and additions to human pleasure belong to the England of the last century. Socrates was said to have 'brought down Philosophy from Heaven to Earth.' So Hogarth took Painting, and from gods and goddesses, nymphs and shepherds, turned the canvass to reflect the real story of our common life,—its pathos, its meanness, its fashions, humours, tears, laughter, triumphs, and depths of degradation. He has touched on little that is simply beautiful; but even in his darker scenes we seldom miss some breeze of wholesome laughter, some face of tender sweetness. Such is the lovely creature in the right-hand corner of the *Actresses*. Charles Lamb has noticed how frequently he introduces children to secure this contrast; 'They have a singular effect in giving tranquillity and a portion of their own innocence to the subject.' In his severest pictures, this admirable critic adds, there is always something to relieve the darkness; 'there is in them the *scorn of vice* and the *pity* too; something to touch the soul, and keep alive the sense of moral beauty; the *lacrymae rerum*, and the sorrowing by which the heart is made better.' Look at the variety of scene and character he has here given us,—and all true to Nature! The most skilful novelist could hardly crowd more suggestive incidents into three volumes than fill the six scenes of *Marriage* as it was in 1750,—the year when this great Tale on canvass was sold to the single bidder at the painter's auction for 90*l*. In the first, we see the wealthy City merchant disposing of his daughter to the young nobleman in return for title and fashionable position. So things were managed a century since. Beyond the bargain, the pair are quite indifferent to the arrangement; they are coupled like the spaniels on the floor, only that they may pull different ways and amuse themselves. We cannot doubt that they go into and see the very best society; yet 'soon after marriage' this becomes not exciting enough; they yawn and quarrel; the Earl gambles and keeps his mistress, the Lady listens to the fascinations of her lawyer. Then the scene shifts toward darker issues; there are terrible suggestions of sin accomplished, and sin approaching, in the *Doctor* and the *Dressing Room*; 'the mill of God,' as the old phrase has it, grinds more rapidly and completely than we often see it in life (but all this was a century ago——); the faithless husband dies by the adulterer's hand, the faithless wife by her own:—her father, true to the passion which

outlives most others, taking the ring from the stiffened finger as she lies on her poisoned deathbed, whilst the sickly child who gives the last kiss will bear into her orphan life the signs of avenging profligacy.—‘What a merit were it in Death, to take this poor maid from the world!’—But the great artist, like Hamlet, ‘cruel that he may be kind,’ and faithful to the last to the true moral of his story, passes on, and leaves it as a warning for ever.

Not inferior are the prodigality of incident and force of thought in the *Rake's Progress* (14 to 21). These, with the only two of the corresponding Female series which were saved from fire at Font-hill (2 and 3), complete the Artist's great Epic of contemporary life.

Hogarth, happily for our pleasure, is not always or often in a mood so severe as this. No man ever possessed more to the full that strong humour which is, as it were, the natural other side to a stern seriousness. His is that hearty healthy laughter, that demure delight in the ludicrous, of which those are capable who have grasped Life strongly: he stands here with Aristophanes and Sterne and Molière, with Burns and Fielding,—with Shakspeare, if we can admit any one to that standing-place. I hope every one will study well those brilliant pages, the *Fair* (84), the *Actresses* (87), the *March to Finchley* (6); the glorious *Election* scenes (9 to 12): for richness of incident, variety of character, for a mingled comedy and tragedy of suggestion, it will not be easy to find their parallel. It would take a little volume to go through these ‘abstracts and brief chronicles of the time;’ but a few of Hogarth's remoter touches of truth must be pointed out. In the *Polling* the first voter, a crippled soldier, is opposed by the attorney on the ground that the Act requires him to lay his *right-hand* (lost in the wars) on the Bible when swearing. In the *Entertainment*, Lamb (to whose inimitable analysis of the whole scene I must refer any reader who wishes to enjoy himself) notices Hogarth's imaginative suggestion of the mob and pressure without, by ‘the sword that has forced an entrance before its master’; and, dwelling on the strong healthy tone of the whole work, directs attention especially to ‘that poor country fellow, that is grasping his staff (which from that difficulty of feeling themselves at home which poor men experience at a feast, he has never parted with since he came into the room), and is enjoying with a relish that seems to fit all the capacities of his soul the slender joke, which that facetious wag his neighbour is practising upon the gouty gentleman, whose eyes the effort to suppress

pain has made as round as rings—does it shock the *dignity of human nature* to look at that man?’—In the *March to Finchley*, (it is the Guards going out through Tottenham Court Road to meet young Charles Edward, then also on a March painted in the brighter colours of *Waverley*,) what runs through the whole is the contrast between the intriguing activity of the Jacobites, and the jovial, unthinking, resolution of the British Grenadier. It will be seen that one of the beauties who hang on the hero in the foreground is, in one sense at least, a Sister of Mercy.—The droll reduction of the classical mythology to the absurdest details of common life in the *Actresses* is undoubtedly a sarcastic revenge on the classical subjects then prescribed as essential to High Art. Juno is enthroned on a wheelbarrow, Night mends her stocking, the Tragic Muse is drawing rouge from a cat’s tail, and Diana reigns over the motley troupe in an undress most undeniably natural. Ganymede has taken to gin, and Flora sleeks her alluring tresses with the candle. . . . It is a kind of Olympus below stairs. These works have suffered less than others by Hogarth from that sinking-in of the surface colours and fine last touches, which has ruined so many pictures begun on a dark ground. Let us add the last touch of irony,—this work, almost sublime in its affluence of invention, was sold for 27*l.*, and returned to the painter as too dear for the money.

In the *Mall* (5) and *Beggars’ Opera* (4), we have two other excellent scenes from the fashions of the day: and the favourite play is again illustrated by the *Polly Peachum* (41). The *Captain Coram* (33) is a fine portrait of the kindhearted officer who ‘ruined himself,’ as the phrase goes, to establish the Foundling Hospital. What an air of rough, unreasoning goodness Hogarth has thrown into the face; what a weather-beaten virtue! This is true portraiture; we see the head of the good old sailor, and his heart also, and are glad to think that, amongst the sneers of the world at his benevolence, he must have had a friend worthy of him in our brave and admirable Humourist.

Great as Hogarth was, more single in his walk than any Englishman but Turner, perhaps from that very singleness he left little immediate effect on English Art. It seemed incredible to the critics of the day that their country could really have bred a Painter. ‘As such,’ said Walpole,—alive as that quick-eyed observer was to the life of his designs,—‘Hogarth has slender merit.’ It was only through that form of art which is at once the

most easily intelligible, and the most directly practical in its purpose, that the belief in an English School could be created. Kneller was the last of that long series of foreign portrait-painters to whom we owe illustrations of our history often more vivid than history itself. When he died, a feeble imitator, whose name only lives through his pupil's, succeeded to fame and fortune. 'Hudson,' says Walpole, 'enjoyed for many years the chief business of portrait-painting in the capital. The country gentlemen were content with his honest similitudes, and with the fair tied wigs, blue velvet coats, and white satin waistcoats, which he bestowed liberally on his customers.' Under this master, a Devonshire lad of 17, **Joshua Reynolds**, was placed in 1740. The boy had shown that early love of drawing which almost invariably seizes on hands destined to Art: in the quiet little town where he was excellently educated by his Father, the vicar and schoolmaster of Plympton, he drew and studied for himself, not without provoking a reproof which is in curious contrast with the habits of his whole life. *Done by Joshua, out of pure idleness*, is the father's note on a sketch by the child, whose patient industry is amongst the most memorable of his many high endowments.—Two years exhausted all that Hudson could teach, when Reynolds, returning home, fell in with the works of a local painter, William Gandy of Exeter. This artist (whose absence from the Exhibition walls will be regretted by many) must have inherited some of the spirit of the great age: Reynolds compared him to Rembrandt; and a phrase of his 'that a picture ought to have a richness in its texture, as if the colours had been composed of cream,' seems to have touched his young countryman with the luminous suggestiveness of a word in season falling on a good and fertile nature. The lesson which Gandy taught was soon re-impressed on Reynolds by the glory and the glow of Venice: whilst in Rome the poetry of his mind was awakened to further advances by the sublime imagination of Michel Angelo, the mysterious grace of Raphael. And when, on his return from Italy in 1752, he dared to combine in his own portraits the qualities he had so much admired, he met with what was meant for ridicule by those who saw in the 'grand Italian manner' the last perfection of art. 'Reynolds, you don't paint so well as when you left England,' said Hudson, when he examined a bold and splendid fancy picture, glowing with colour which for a hundred years had been unknown in the island. 'Shakspeare in poetry, and

Kneller in painting, d—mme' cried another, and shut the door in disgust on the young reformer. Nor are these judgments surprising: there is no labour so odious as the labour of Thought; and it needs hard thinking to grasp and to delight in the new ways which Genius discovers for us.

I have given this little sketch of Reynolds' early life because it illustrates with force the position of English Art in its beginnings. How he soon fought his way to sympathy and success; how he was chosen the first President of our English Academy; how he became *Sir Joshua* at the hand even of a king whose favourite was West,—how he received the higher honour of friendship from the best of his time, Johnson, and Burke, and Goldsmith, and Percy,—are they not written for ever in the book of Boswell?—than which Reynolds himself has left us no more skilful portraiture. By the time, however, that he formed one of that distinguished society, (1760,) he no longer stood alone in his career; from the east of England a painter had come with genius as graceful and capacity more varied than his own, and by native feeling and what models he might have found within the country, had already framed for himself a style of singular charm. Gainsborough and Reynolds are inseparable names in the brief but glorious annals of English Art; their characteristics and what they did for us may best be examined together.

Hogarth had given us the first examples of force and life; to these qualities, in one word, they added Poetry. The sense of beauty, the love of innocence,—no artists have enjoyed these more deeply than Reynolds and Gainsborough; nor in management of colour, in gracefulness of line, and charming delineation of character, have they been often equalled. Their art, in technical points, was unconsciously based on that of their great foreign predecessors: in them ended, in fact, at least for a time, that noble style of portraiture which begun with Giorgione and Titian in Italy, and was continued by Velasquez in Spain, in Flanders and England by Vandyke and Rubens. It is however with the manner of the two last-named that their work has the closest sympathy:—to that style which aims at more than simple likeness, giving with the figure some suggestion of incident or sentiment, and converting the portrait into an ornamental picture. As the old employment of Art for religious purposes died out, this fashion naturally took its place; but it was carried by Reynolds and Gainsborough

into new fields, and touched with a sweeter poetry. The progress of human intellect is everywhere a series of strange surprises—not more at what men attain, than at the seemingly capricious laws which have so long delayed their attaining it. Thus, before these artists, Childhood and Girlhood had never been caught by the painter in their whole nature. Earlier art had given children of ideal grandeur or prosaic truth; but such ingenuous grace, such holy simplicity, as Reynolds shows in the *Age of Innocence* (65),—that ideal of maidenhood in miniature, the *Penelope Boothby* (70), the *Infant Samuel* (88), were as new in Art as the exquisite playfulness of the baby in (60), or the arch laughing creature who clings to *Lady Galway* (63). Or take the *Princess Sophia* (64); Reynolds has left us little so carefully finished and so perfect,—in fact this, the *Duchess of Devonshire*, the *Angels*, the *Age of Innocence*, the *Miss Boothby*, and the *Lady E. Foster* (69), seem the only pictures by him here (nor are there more than very few elsewhere) which are carried even to approximate realization. He probably worked this up so highly to please George III, whose taste or eyesight led him to make smoothness and neatness the standard of art:—but how large and simple is the arrangement! It is a canvass only a few inches long; yet by placing the noble child alone in a low foreground, with one great sweep of dewy fields and woods beyond her, by the grandeur of her fine but yielding limbs, and the earnestness of her infant eyes, Reynolds has given it more greatness than Barry or Haydon could have laid on an acre of surface. Turn from the repose of this to the animation of those just noticed;—and remember that, with the exception of a very few occasional hints, such rendering of the delight of a mother's heart was literally as much Reynolds' invention in Art as if the feeling had then for the first time arisen in Europe.

Gainsborough's track is found in not fewer new ways than Sir Joshua's. He was the first painter in England who felt the loveliness of landscape: he was the first painter in Europe who felt the charms of innocent poverty. The humours of common life, its mirth and its degradation, had been painted in Holland; an ideal rusticity, a hundredfold more degraded, was at this time the popular art of France, the theme of poets, and the delight of courtiers:—but a clothier's son grew up in Suffolk, and by the instincts of his own heart saw the truth and beauty which were hidden from the eyes of Amsterdam and Versailles. Foolish stories

have been spread with congenial delight by narrow-minded men, that Sir Joshua was idly jealous of his great contemporary : — it is pleasant to turn to his noble work (90), and remember that this — one of the first-fruits of Gainsborough's work in London, — was at once appreciated and bought by Reynolds. The *Girl feeding Pigs* (90) is in a grand style but rather artificially golden in colour ; the *Girl and Dog* (73) and the *Cottage Door* (95) will probably be greater favourites. In his pictures of incident or character (Fancy scenes would be too slight a name), Reynolds does not equal, perhaps was unwilling to attempt, the common-life simplicity of Gainsborough's ; his *Infant* (64), his *Simplicity* (39), with so many more, give us dear children, but not the wild wayside cottage creature ; his *Shepherd Boy* (66) is a child of idyllic fancy, meditative and gracious, — lost in a maze of sweet thoughts, or awaking too-faithful recollections. . . . It would be idle, however, to weigh these admirable Poets against each other in a spirit of partisanship ; — neither of them can be called a Painter in the complete sense ; their work wants thoroughness of realization ; the drawing, always exquisite in feeling, is often halting in power ; the dresses, landscape, and other details are hinted at rather than mastered. Yet, after full confession of such deficiencies, they are amongst the very few great portrait painters of Europe. No one has exceeded the airy grace and ingenuous delicacy which Gainsborough threw into his designs ; no one has surpassed Reynolds in the charm of naturalness, in 'his profound feeling' (to quote the admirable words of Wilkie) 'for the indescribable thoughts of the inward man,' in his high and holy *Simplicity*. Take the *Lady E. Foster* (69), perhaps the most consummate piece of his art on these walls ; a quiet square of gray and auburn, a calm countenance, looking out with full eyes and a half smile of thoughtfulness on her gentle lips : — nothing brilliant or striking, only a serene serious sweetness that haunts the memory like some one of the airs which Mozart seems to have stolen direct from Heaven. Gainsborough's *Nancy Parsons* (48) is equally refined in workmanship, equally subduing in its unpretending gentleness. But so it is always with the very great in Art ; the perfect thing comes before us in the very modesty of Nature, jostled perhaps by a throng of clamorous pretence, content to be left or looked at ; but we look, and all the spell of Truth is upon us.

Neither Reynolds nor Gainsborough often touch this height, although much of the inspiration is on many of their can-

vasses; — the *Mrs. Siddons* (110), the *Graces* (59), *Mrs. Hartley* (135), *Lord Pembroke* (27), *Mrs. Elliott* (116; the best preserved bit of Gainsborough's work), the rival *Duchesses* (76 and 72), the *Mrs. Sheridan* (74): — but I need not here reprint the long list of our treasures.

If a cautious comparison may be risked, it may be noted that Gainsborough shows, on the whole, more care in invention; Reynolds, more felicity in form; that he has more force in colour, Gainsborough more purity. There is something of the daybreak in Gainsborough's tints; of the sunset in Sir Joshua's. The first is on the whole the truer colourist: splendid as are the tones of the *Iphigenia* (102), they are dimmed a little by comparison with the inner heat which glows through the incomparable *Blue Boy* (31)—in rich quality of Painting probably the finest thing within the walls. And there is also in this magical Master's work an incomparable airiness of touch and figure, an occasional even nearer nearness to nature in his girls and children. Yet Reynolds seems to me decidedly the greater artist: his grace is the deeper and the more memorable; when the subject allows, he rises to a peculiar and subtle grandeur. I have quoted already his phrase, that 'no man ever put more into a head than was in his own.' But he who thus expressed the essential law and limit of portraiture was reckoned among the best in an age fertile in strong thinkers. A lofty equanimity, a scorn of the world's trifles and gossip, a sweet humility towards all nature, generosity and gentleness towards fellow-workmen, — such, and others like them, were the characteristics of this great painter. Patient industry, — that quality so inseparable from real genius, that no wonder he thought them identical, — was his guiding principle through a long life of constant education and advance in his art. Yet it may be doubted whether any one of the pictures which to us seem masterpieces satisfied the painter, or adequately rendered that idea which, in his own poetical words, 'subsists only in the mind. The sight never beheld it, nor has the hand expressed it; it is an idea residing in the breast of the artist, which he is always labouring to impart, and which he dies at last without imparting.'

We have one further feature to notice in Gainsborough's art. It is not represented here in full force; yet it is as a Landscape Painter that we generally first think of him. The specimens exhibited are however charming scenes, touched with all the

poetry of his mind. They are slightly painted, it is true; general effect alone is sought, neither the colour nor the details truly realized; yet there is a largeness and unity of feeling about them which may be called the first impression of Nature. They have all, also, that look of utter ease in the execution which is always a source of pleasure to spectators; a flowing facility, which reminds us that Genius does its great work almost always without conscious striving, as we may suppose Shakspeare composed *Othello* or *Hamlet*, — ‘without more trouble than it costs small people to do small things; nay, perhaps, with less.’ The *Cattle-Driving* (118) is a marvel in this way; one might almost say it had painted itself, with such straightforwardness of execution, such effortless ease has Gainsborough laid-in the solemn march of the noble herd, and filled his sky with air and sunlight. Of course, our deepest study, with our highest praise, should be kept for painting more thorough than this: yet no distance is greater than that between the slight work of perfect feeling, and the random blot or idle dashes with which we often see the canvass overscrawled by the manufacturers of picturesqueness.

Gainsborough’s landscape is far the purest in that century; yet it does not stand alone. By force of that larger law which underlies the progress of Art, Painting in this point only reflected the spirit which, at the same period, led our Poets to the first attempts in simple description of Nature. Something of the better mind of Thomson and Goldsmith passed into Gainsborough. In other artists we find more of the gloom and mannerism from which the *Seasons* are not free, and which breaks out with greater force in Logan or Shenstone. Wright of Derby, respectable as a portrait-painter, is not without a certain poetry in his landscapes. They are overwhelmingly heavy and monotonous; yet the surfaces and forms of the distant hills are carefully treated in the *Ulleswater* (56).

Loutherbouurg’s vast views (106 and 130) show a more practised hand than Wright’s, but less evidence of an aim at simple truth. Morland, once a great name, and a man of distinct capacity, has suffered the penalty which at last overtakes those faithless to their gift. Gleams of happy effect in landscape appear in his works; the grouping is natural; there is an occasional air of the picturesque which connects him with more recent artists: — No. 103 is a fair specimen. The rest we can class only as furniture-pictures, the cast-off finery and outworn fashions of the past. Morland is one of the

many who influence their day mainly by their worse qualities; one painter of his careless facility and coarse effectiveness, like one commonplace and easy versifier, dulls the taste and drains the purse of a hundred patrons, disheartening by unmerited success the true artist, and sacrificing his art to that mere ornamentalism which, in modern times, is its besetting danger.

Not so **Richard Wilson**; — one of the four great English artists (the others I need hardly name) of our first period. Hogarth was the most original of these men; Wilson the least. Yet his pictures prove that if born in better days, he would have freed himself from the bonds of imitation, under which the admirers of the French-Italian school may be said to have bound him on pain of starving. Even so, he was in advance of his age, as the sadly-comic anecdote proves which I have already quoted. His landscape wants the grand conception of Gainsborough, his English sky, and air, and freshness; it wants, also, the picturesqueness, the accuracy of detail, to which we are accustomed. But Nature, in the word most often applied to her by her oldest poets, is pre-eminently *varied*, — she has largeness, not less than minuteness; beside the glory of the sunset or the tenderness of the meadow grass, — the agitation of storm, and the repose of far horizons. These great elementary features of the landscape were Wilson's portion. The tempest, the calm, the quiet irradiance of midday or twilight, vexed seas, or gorgeous ruins, mass, and breadth, and stateliness, — in such scenes his truly poetical spirit found what he could render with force and beauty. In the representation of these he had no forerunner in English art, nor has he found many followers. — Most of our examples belong to his half-classical style: the charming *Landscape* (105) with its glory of golden flood and hazy hills is an excellent specimen of his poetical manner: the *View on the Dee* (104) represents what was probably the natural impulse of the great artist. The picturesque point of sight chosen, — clear above the foreground, — is characteristic of Wilson: the perfect state of his colouring is not less so. His straightforward and simple work contrasts in this matter favourably with the fugitive tints of Reynolds and Gainsborough.

A country which had produced four such contemporaries as Hogarth, Wilson, Reynolds, and Gainsborough, might, one would think, have set at rest the doubt whether it possessed a capacity for Art, — at least amongst Englishmen: yet so strangely strong was the prejudice in favour of what was called the 'grand style,' that

men lately living might have heard Reynolds apologize in public for preferring such a work as Gainsborough's *Girl and Dog* to the sacred and historical pictures of Battoni, and Mengs, and Concha, and Constanza, and fifty more of the illustrious obscure who then flourished in Europe. 'I am well aware,' he says, 'how much I lay myself open to the censure and ridicule of the academical professors of other nations, in preferring the humble attempts of Gainsborough to the works of those regular graduates in the Great Historical Style. But we have the sanction of all mankind in preferring genius in a lower rank of art to feebleness and insipidity in the highest.' *A lower rank*, we observe;—in which Sir Joshua's own admirable modesty would have placed himself;—so much was he influenced by the theories of the day! Meanwhile, what wonder that other artists, convinced by these theories as true, or accepting them as useful, should endeavour to remove from England the imaginary disgrace of deficiency in 'the great historical style'?—The fate of these attempts, from West to Haydon, is a sufficient warning how the Art will always end, which is founded on speculation,—be it ever so learned and ingenious. Had they been men gifted with real power; had they said, as with accuracy they might, that Painting could do more than embody satire, or reflect landscape; that something beyond the strength of manhood and the grace of woman should be held worth representing,—they might undoubtedly have enriched us with a style to which no one would grudge the epithets 'great' and 'historical.' But when 'historical' was limited to subjects from the far past, resting their appeal, not on living interests, but on books; or, if modern, only when represented in classical dress, or in the manner of some former artist, what but failure could come of it? Historical Art is the vivid representation of any event or emotion, not belonging to simply domestic life or personal fancy,—which the artist feels strongly: Historical Art will hence almost always be employed with the events of his own age, because these he will feel strongly; although a few other subjects of great meaning for all time, as those from Scripture, will be within the reach of very gifted men. But these,—West, Fuseli, Northcote, Barry, Haydon, Hilton, were not strong men; their reputation rested, not on the goodness of their work, but on the prevalence of the theories alluded to, or on the clamour they raised about them. By this sign they may be known; for the true artist works on silently and devotedly, hardly conscious how he

works; all that he can say to explain himself is that 'he is trying at it,' like William Hunt, or 'following a certain figure in his mind,' like Raphael: whilst the false overflows with reasons for everything he does, and complains that his age does him no justice.

These remarks may save me from the ungrateful task of criticizing the failures of men who,—though mistaken in their aim, and unequal to their object,—gave a lifetime to their uncomfortable pictures, and have each some gift which, better used, might have done us service. Yet, where it is just to blame, the negative advantage these artists rendered us should be noticed:—they kept alive the study of human form on a life-size scale, without some study of which no School of painting, not even Landscape, can flourish;—we can hardly say, they kept alive, but at least they petrified and preserved the feeling for Art in a form beyond mere ornament for the drawing-room. And, although their united powers would be below the stature of the perfect Artist, each, as is the way with mankind, shows some small special faculty or the traces of individual bias. Thus there is considerable dramatic power in **Opie's** *Death of Rizzio* (119): the figure of the dying Italian is well imagined, although we must regret the many parallel lines above the Mary, and the piebald spaces of black and gray:—**Haydon's** *Judgment of Solomon* (269) has much force, though little taste, in colour:—with **Hilton's** *Innocents* and *Crucifixion* (208 and 200), it is a lesson how far apart are size and sublimity. Three once celebrated names may be added, each also, like Haydon, a clever author in his day, —**Northcote**, **Fuseli**, and **Barry**. But we 'look, and pass on' before the cold barren correctness of the *Adam and Eve* (82), the theatrical insipidity of the *Argyll* (122), the frenzied fancy of the *Satan* (211). 'Nature put him out,' said Fuseli; modern German art has said the same:—but Nature takes her own quiet way, after the years of loud self-assertion bringing her centuries of long forgetfulness. We need not study what she has condemned:—the most imperfect attempts in Art deserve respectful attention, when they are the steps of children upward:—but there is little pleasure or profit in the long annals of learned emptiness and ingenious self-deception.

A very few specimens, however, we have in a more real style. Perhaps no one ever gained celebrity with a worse manner of painting than **West**. It is hardly possible to include such work as the first President's *Iphigenia* (102), and the second President's

Oath of Hannibal (161), or *Death of Wolfe* (123), within the limits of one and the same art. The *Hannibal* is an excellent example of the false historical school just exposed. But the *Wolfe*, below all criticism as it is in colour and handling, and untrue to nature in its landscape features, has the high merit of priority in representing a serious contemporary event,—as it really might have happened. Loud was the outcry of all men of taste at this barbarous truth; guns and regimentals where ‘high art’ required battering-rams and breastplates! Barry came to the rescue with a *Death of Wolfe* even more profoundly classical; every one ‘standing naked in the open air,’ like the figures in the groves of Blarney. This was a natural extravagance to the enthusiastic Irishman; but must we not be surprized that he whose whole work was given to pictures of a truth and nature rarely equalled, that he who painted the *Duchess of Devonshire and her Child*, should have joined the discontented? Such is the blindness of a little learning, and a great respect for precedent.—West tells us that Sir Joshua came to his house, fortified by the company of an Archbishop, to dissuade him from running the risk of an elementary faithfulness to Nature. ‘Reynolds began a very ingenious and elegant dissertation on the state of the public taste in this country, and the danger which every innovation incurred of contempt and ridicule, and concluded by urging me earnestly to adopt the costume of antiquity, as more becoming the greatness of my subject than the modern garb of European warriors.’—It is pleasant to tell the conclusion of the story. ‘They went away, and returned when I had the painting finished. Reynolds seated himself before the picture, examined it with deep and minute attention for half an hour: then rising, said, ‘West has conquered.—I retract my objections. I foresee that this picture will occasion a revolution in art.’

This wholesome revolution has hardly yet reached us;—although our Gallery contains two admirable examples. **Copley’s** *Death of Major Pierson* (killed in resisting the French attack on Jersey in 1781,) is a true historical work (128). Carefully coloured, and better composed than West’s, it is also infinitely more dramatic and vigorous. The movement of the central group, so rapid and so even, as they carry off the wounded hero, and the downright honest eagerness of the ‘black servant who revenged his master’s death at once, are especially good. The struggle for subsistence and early death left **Cross**, the painter of the *Death of*

Coeur de Lion (403), time to execute but few works: like this, however, although deficient in the graces of colour, they are amongst the highest historical pictures in dramatic truth, grandeur of arrangement, and beauty of line; nor in the weak point of English Art,—life-size delineation of human form,—has any English artist shown greater mastery. We must regret that **Pickersgill's** companion-picture (433) is a sample of the weak style already noticed.

No reputation in Art is so immediate as that of a successful Portrait-painter;—none fades so soon, unless supported by first-rate excellence. It is a reputation more than any other made by mere fashion, and fashion soon finds some new favourite, destined in his turn to the same pilgrimage, from the drawing-room to the hall, the bedroom, and the garret. Except where they painted a face of lasting interest, or touched a canvass with happy colour, such has been the fate of the long succession of Reynolds' followers. There is little by them that can rank as Art in the high sense. The portraits by **Opie**, **Jackson**, and **Raeburn** show some force: **Ramsay**, **Romney**, and **Copley** some character. The latter's *Family-piece* (51) has a certain richness in colour, and a pleasing naturalness in the action of the child on the right, and of the infant half falling back in its eagerness to reach upwards. The chubby boy in the centre is (or was—which should we say?) the likeness of the present noble possessor. Copley's *Three Princesses* (129) are also animated and life-like. Time has mellowed many of these works, and the half-fancy subjects display a largeness and breadth in style since uncommon: but it cannot be said, that the painters carried their art to any further development.

That **Lawrence** accomplished this, was the universal belief,—not unwarranted by the delicacy of his early drawings,—after 1800:—and few have had a finer field than the popular portrait-painter of Europe at that period. Yet beyond an occasional vivacity of expression, as in the *Pius VII* (141), and an elegant air, his portraits have little merit; even the features are in general imperfectly given, the character in its reality seldom touched. Lords *Eldon* and *Liverpool* (196 and 159) are favourable specimens. In his Ladies what we see is 'not fairness, but May-fairness;' ball-room grace, and refined affectation. But Lawrence had a truer gift for children; the *Emily* and *Laura Calmady* (177) are charmingly arranged and painted with a vivid touch; yet here even the profile is rudely drawn, nor

can the general effect atone for the lurid sky and coarse handling of the cheeks and shadows.

Lawrence's manner, concealing want of care and character under slovenly smartness, was exactly fitted to influence art for evil : and it did so. Portrait manufacture will always exist ; it is the one form of Painting which cannot be dispensed with :—if it be only honest, we may be satisfied without genius : but it is a true misfortune when a bad popular style corrupts the public taste, renders spectators ignorantly indifferent to thorough work, and turns what might have been living art into the rival schools of slovenliness without effect, or hardness without power. The calamitous influences under which English Portrait-sculpture has been thus degraded will be hereafter noticed : meanwhile, to pass rapidly over the uncomfortable duty of censure, I must add that the work of Grant, Pickersgill, Buckner, Knight, Swinton, and others, appears to fall almost hopelessly within the style just characterized. Nor, although some better portraiture exists, can any one who knows what the human face is in the hands of Titian or Reynolds or Holbein,—who knows what it is in itself, to take the truer standard,—claim for us any that the next age will reckon great. But greatness in this sphere of art is very rare, and work which does not share in that quality, if it be only sincere, has its own real value. We may recognize such in the force of **Gordon**, the grace of **Boxall**, the thoughtful design of **H. Phillips** and **S. Lawrence** ; in the sweet colour, and rare delicacy in touch, of **Watts**, the firm drawing and well-rendered character of **Lowes Dickinson**, beside some steady work by artists of less marked style. From the promise here shown, advance in our Portraiture may be hopefully expected.

But the life of our Art in this century lies almost entirely in its Schools of Landscape and Incident : both practically inventions of the last sixty years. Nothing would seem more natural than to give the duration and the charm of Colour to what so delights us in the Landscape or the Novel. Yet nothing is more certain than that, as in the parallel instance of written Romance, men seemed to stand for centuries on the verge of the new fields, into which, by some law, imperative as those to which we arbitrarily confine the name natural, they were unable to penetrate. Except a few scattered works, notably by Jan Steen and Greuze, nothing that can be fairly called a Tale on canvass occurs in all the elder art of Europe. The Dutch painted

characters, but hardly tales; Hogarth's are satires or moralizations rather than pictures of Incident,—in which some touch of sentiment or humour is always included: Wright's meritorious *Forge* (124) tells no story.—In the case of Landscape, although I am aware of none that can be called Landscape pure before the sixteenth century, yet such powerful attempts had been made in that direction by the great Venetian painters, that it is probable this form of Art would have come earlier into vitality had it not been 'cabined and confined' by the peculiar influences of the *Renaissance* age, which told on Landscape almost with the same ill effect which, as I shall point out at length, it exerted over Sculpture. The much-vexed question as to the merit of the Landscape painters during the seventeenth century cannot be raised here: but it will probably be allowed that they treated but a limited range of Nature, that their art is immature and conventional, and that the modern manner in Landscape is a thing entirely different from that of Claude or Ruysdael. What I most wish any readers of these notes to feel, is how much Painting is the 'child of its age.' From the mechanical or material features which belong to them, the Fine Arts are so in a degree much beyond the other Arts which employ the heart and hand of Genius. Poetry may sometimes verge on Prophecy: the Philosopher has been often in advance of his own audience:—but the canvass or the marble can only mirror the feelings and tendencies of the Present. The writer knows but three exceptions to this law, if it may be called so. Phidias and Giotto, so far as can be judged by our imperfect materials, outran in intellect even the Florence and Athens of their time. It is not altogether to our glory that the third Artist of the same august rank should have been a similarly misappreciated Englishman.

Yet Turner himself, alone as he is in his elevation, took the impulse to his art from surrounding influences. Both the Landscape and the Incident style, in all their varieties, are strictly represented by similar modes of thought and feeling in the English mind and literature. They mark the art of this century not less distinctly than religious subjects mark that of the fourteenth. Hardly known to our great grandfathers, what has rendered them so prominent now? In such inquiries the risk is great, of considering as cause what is only itself an effect of some larger and, perhaps, undecipherable reason. Yet it is indisputable that the growth of the Incident style in painting runs parallel with the great outburst of novel writing from about 1790 onwards, with the social change which gave the

patronage of art rather to the mercantile than to the educated classes, and with that fusion of ranks and interests which (in another sphere) found expression in Burns, Scott, Crabbe, and Wordsworth. In figure-subjects, we might broadly say that the region of our modern art is Home, whilst the ancient found its home in Heaven. Without pressing the moral of this memorable change to conclusions which, whatever they might be, would hardly not be disputable, it may be safely remarked that our Art hence runs great risk of falling from the great aim of lofty pleasure. He who paints for the house is liable to not less temptations than he who painted for the cloister. The feeble joke, the feeble sentiment; the pursuit of the pretty, or the passion for the voluptuous,—such, and others like them, are the besetting sins of the Incident Style in England, and to point out prominent instances, if truly done, will be at once the vexation and the value of this little criticism.

I must now briefly indicate the deeper roots of that Landscape School, which, as the art which looks at Nature with a single eye, or which sees in her an expression of human feeling, may be fairly and fully claimed for England. Like the style of domestic Incident, this style is also in strict sympathy with corresponding phases in literature and taste. And as the former was contemporary with the modern novel, so the latter has appeared simultaneously with the love of travelling and the love of natural description. These passions (we may justly so call them) are due, no doubt, in part to simple increased opportunity; to recent wealth, and peace, and multiplied facilities for journeying. Perhaps the more familiar conversance with nature in her loveliness or her terror, the simple sight of Western Scotland, or Monte Rosa, or Sorrento, has inspired the wish to transfer to our walls what, in verse or in actual vision, has so charmed our senses: perhaps the poetry of physical science has enlightened and enlarged our sympathies: perhaps the very contrast with the civilization which enables men to travel readily, deepens their appreciation of the scenes in which civilization has no part, and even the powers of man seem but a little thing before the majesty of Nature. However this may be, the love of landscape has been a glorious gain to modern English art, and gives it its most essentially original character. We no longer see trees and mountains through the imperfect eyes of Claude or Poussin; we do not measure the waterfall by the standard of Ruysdael, or the twilight after the proportions of Rembrandt. That by which we unconsciously

test Landscape painting is rather the written landscape of the glorious Poets of our own age: by what we have learned from Scott in the novels or the ballads, from the imaginative wildness of Shelley or the purple profusion of Keats; we are alternately swayed by the torrent force and breadth of Byron in the *Pilgrimage*—or Nature opens to us her 'heart of hearts' in Wordsworth, and we learn that the poetry of *Hartleap Well* or *Tintern* has passed into the soul of Turner by a mysterious and spiritual transfiguration.

Like that of every great artist, whether in words or colours, the work of **Turner** is stamped with the gradations of his own growth in mind and in experience. From the time when his style was formed, his oil painting differs essentially from all other men's in this,—that it is thought of as water-colour painting, and, even almost beyond what the material admits of, conforms to the treatment of water-colours. The reason for this manner is seen in the result. No landscape but his adequately renders what is the first and the last feature in all real landscapes,—the sense of air, space, and light. Others' work looks like a copy on canvass; Turner's, like a vision. So far as this marvellous effect depends on technical method, he gained it by repeating in oils the translucent style of water-colours. This Turner learned early from the great water-colourists, Cozens and Girtin, who influenced his youth. Yet the lesson was not fully felt till his manhood. His first style in oils (alloyed by the imperfect art of former landscapists, though careful and imaginative far beyond their grasp) is not free from the heaviness and artificial arrangement which he heard praised in Poussin and Vandewelde. Like Gainsborough and Reynolds, this Englishman also had to wage war with the blindness of those who could see in nature only what the Fleming or the Frenchman had seen before them. Several of the oil pictures exhibited belong to this period. The *Italy* and the *Hersé* (339 and 292) remind one at first sight of Claude and Gaspar:—although in their delicate trees and ethereal distances they surpass the early artists. These, in their best works, often give a lively effect of distance by use of excellent tone and by bringing their dark masses against the horizon:—the difference is, that Turner's pictures, inferior in quality of tint, render the expanse by perfect *drawing*. The *Twickenham* (334) again is like Wilson glorified; (compare his landscape 105); it has exquisite passages, especially in the water and middle distance: but the real force of the man is not in it. We see that, when we are reminded only of Nature by the vital truth of the

work, and only of Turner by the remembrance that no other man has ever worked so. The *Nore Guardship* (331) and the *Schaffhausen* (332) are admirable specimens of his earlier treatment of water. Each expresses its two essential qualities, weight and fluency; the *Falls* giving the arrowy swiftness, the *Nore* the solemn heaving. And in both this effect is gained by sheer truth of design; nothing trusted to the chance-work of the brush; every line of the retiring waves and the infinite curvature of the waterfall being given with a delicacy and expression which are only rivalled by their beauty. What a variety in grasp do these few pictures display! Yet we have only to look up, and we see the Master already passing to new efforts;—the glow of sunset in *The Mill* (351), the pearliness of the morning in *Dunstanboro'* (350). The *Dunstanboro'* should be also noticed for its peculiar truth in rendering the roll of translucent waves towards a rocky coast, and the strange settled calm with which sunlight always seems to delight in gilding the relics of vexed and violent ages.

These pictures however, with those which I have not space to touch on, were they twenty times multiplied, would give but a faint impression of the vast industry of Turner,—of his marvellous variety, of his ever-new creativeness. To describe his subjects would be to re-write the landscapes of all the Poets. Yet twenty years were given to such work, before he thought himself qualified to attempt Colour in its full harmonies. To this point it was mastery over Form:—henceforth, everything was primarily thought of in Colour. Here those limitations of the Art which I briefly glanced at before should be remembered:—especially on one point, which gives the key to what rendered Turner at once so unapproachable in effect, and so unintelligible to careless spectators. Nature distances the Painter most in the force and gradation of her Light. Now, as Space and Air were the qualities which Turner most aimed at, he required the most luminous scale of colour attainable: and hence, in place of the golden tones hitherto used to express the sunbeams, adopted pure white for his highest tint. He thus sacrificed something of the positive truth of colour; but in return, he gained a vastly enlarged power of variety and gradation of light;—by one of the daring compromises of Genius, making his work positively less true, that relatively it might be much truer.

For illustrations however of Turner in his strength I must refer altogether to the $\frac{1}{2}$ Water-colour Gallery. We have nothing here

which resembles the *Téméraire*, the *Daphné*, the *Port Ruysdael*, or the *Venice* of his own collection. But a few words must be given to the last period of his work, from which that of his extreme old age should be excluded, in simple justice to the man. Although the failure of sight and strength was approaching, the undaunted and unwearied artist set himself to paint what would have foiled Titian or Tintoret in the flush of their youth,—scenes which the eye can hardly see for their splendour, or the mind grasp for their delicate and evanescent magnificence. To be unable to render with the relative degree of imitation possible when fainter lights and simpler landscapes are chosen, the sun in his strength, or the twilight in its tenderness, is inevitable to art and her imperfect materials. All she can give, even when most utterly literal and imitative, is an effect, an imaginative remembrance, a hint of far-off glory. Yet Turner, in these later works, is alone in a circle no others have dared to tread. And when attempting less arduous themes, he threw over his latest pictures such a sweet and solemn pensiveness, a beauty so profound and yet so simple, treating all with an originality so entire, and concentrating in them such a magnificent mastery over every aspect of Nature,—that his Art seems to pass into something of an absolutely different kind from that which other men have been able to practise.

‘The name of Shakspeare,’ says Mr. Hallam, ‘is the greatest in our literature—it is the greatest in all literature.’ Turner is one of the very few men to whom similar words might be applied without exaggeration. He is the greatest of English landscape painters; he is the greatest of all landscape painters. Others have rivalled him in quality of colour, others in fidelity of detail; he has failed at times from over-ambition of attempt, at times from obscurity of purpose; he trusted occasionally too much to facility in execution, he was led away by caprice of fancy—yet he is still the Shakspeare of another and a hardly less splendid poetical kingdom. No one has penetrated so deeply into the soul of nature; no one has so surprised her in her sympathy with man; no one so nearly rendered her multitudinous variety,—her ineffable and infinite mysteriousness. Aspects which to others almost singly engrossed their strength, are but modes and moments in the torrent of his prodigal creativeness; yet each of them is treated with a vitality and a fullness which the best masters had not attained to. Compare him with Titian in the forest, Rubens in the meadow, Rembrandt in the twilight, Cuyp at midday—with the storms of Salvator, or

the repose of Claude; Stanfield's sea, Linnell's woodland, the coast-scenes of Hook, the glens of Landseer—but this one has included and surpassed them all. Yet, if praise ended here, Turner's most peculiar merit would hardly be expressed. For whilst he has made the closest approach to painting the infinity of nature, he is almost alone in his rendering of her deeper poetry. That deeper poetry springs invariably from the presence of human feeling—either contrasted with or embodied in nature; nor, without this touch of Humanity, are our profoundest sympathies ever awakened. To impress on his work this sentiment, the painter does not necessarily require that man should form a part of his representation. There are pictures by Turner more peopled in their waste wildness, than the most elaborate figure-landscapes of Claude or Canaletti. But it is still the sense of the Human element which gives loneliness to the desert, and splendour to the city; which recalls the past in the ruins of Rome, and speaks of the future in the fields and coasts of England. There is a terrible seriousness about his work, a moral sadder and deeper than Hogarth's: 'the riddle of the painful earth' flashes out through many among these scenes of more than earthly loveliness. Everywhere he contrasts the fate of man, his passions, and his achievements, with the landscape around him, or makes the landscape itself a reflection of the drama of life on the more august theatre of nature. Birth and death, stories of man's strength and degradation, love and despair, poetry and pathos, are written in the scarlet and azure of Turner's skies, revealed by the repose and the fury of his seas, or shadowed forth by the myriad forms and fissures of his mountain-valleys. In his art there is spirit stirring in the tree-tops, and a voice of more than what we rashly name Inanimate Nature in the torrent:—

The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration, and the poet's dream.

But these are things which may be felt, though they can hardly be spoken: it is impossible to put them fully into words:—if we could, why should Turner have painted this world of Poetry for us?

Turner's long life (1775-1851) has carried us to our own days: we must turn back to the landscape painters of his youth. Here we find several who worked in a mixed style, blending the traditions of the Schools with the better lessons of Nature. **Callcott's** manner is the most artificial; it is a cold steady compromise between the old Dutch

and Italian artists, and will always please those who prefer recognizing the imitation of familiar forms to searching out the truths presented by an inventive Master. But a glance at the three large water-pieces (213, 193, and 192) will show that Callcott is without the charm of tone that has given Claude and Cuyp their glory; whilst a comparison of his skies with Turner's in 333 will bring out with equal force the difference between drawing clouds and fancying them. Even his *Sunset at Salerno* (163) is chill, unfeeling paint; one would think it an Arctic evening. In this our attention is distinctly drawn to the time of day; but Callcott's other pictures leave us in an uncomfortable hesitation. This may be noted as a special proof of deadness in a painter; for the real hour is hardly ever doubtful; it is a thing we feel at once, when out of doors. **Collins'** work has a truer daylight look, with less vapid colour; there is air and saltiness about his seas; his figures in 274 have some happy vivacity; but on the whole he must be ranked with Callcott, to whose style his own appears nearly allied. The *Greenwich Reach* (265) and *Sea-piece* (169), by the little-known artists, **Vincent** and **J. Chalon**, are far truer landscapes; their faults those of imperfectly-trained power, not of deficient original force. The confused and angry splash of the waves in the foreground of the *Sea-piece* is especially noticeable.

Two other painters chose Hobbema as their model; **P. Nasmyth** and **Crome**. The first, as here represented, hardly quits the narrow and profitless field of imitation:—but Crome of Norfolk was of a much higher stamp. His work is rarely powerful; it hardly takes a wider range than the intensely rural landscape of his native county,—its characteristic oak-copses, and still streams, and the gray or russet cottages that for centuries have been mirrored in their gliding. But Crome breathes over these scenes the poetry which lifelong attachment and faithful study revealed in them. Only one who worked in this spirit could have given such grace to the pollard willows in the *Heath Scene* (137), or thrown the delicate gleam of afternoon sunlight over the copse to the right of the *Landscape* (126). The *Mousehold Heath* (157) is in a grander style; reminding us of David Cox in its sympathy for towering cloud, and wide wildness. Crome's tree-drawing, as in the *Oak* (156), is more accurate than **Constable's**, but inferior to his in relief.

The artist last named is here seen in his full capacity. Powerful in rendering effect, but effect only, he is one of those whose

influence on Art has been unfortunate. Very few, if any, of the pictures by him are quite satisfactory: several, as the *Waterloo Bridge* (306) and the *Cenotaph* (286) are knife-work, not brush-work: neither tree nor cloud are ever truly drawn:—yet, as with Crome, there is a dominant sense of poetry over all; a self-abandonment of the painter to the sentiment of his landscape. The flicker and ripple on the water-surface of the *Lock* (320), the solemn gloom of the *Dell* (255), the green rankness of water meadows in the *Salisbury* (254)—little touches, it is true—but these are touches of living Nature. The *London* (305) is an excellent example of the woven clouds and tender tearful atmosphere to which Constable too persistently limited himself: the *Hay Wain* (but why without the hay?) shows the largest manner, and is particularly happy in the well-felt distance and sunlight gleams over the reeking pasturage. But the *Glebe Farm* (307) is perhaps Constable's best work in fullness of design and skill of execution. What a homely grandeur there is in the ragged foreground—what a sense of the deep, deep country about the Farm—

———An English home—gray twilight pour'd
On dewy pastures, dewy trees
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

In strong contrast with these lovers of Nature and her modesty are **Martin** and **Danby**. The once-famous *Belshazzar* (234) and *Fall* (248), with its rival, the *Red Sea* (244),—triumphs of Perspective in paint and the Mechanical Sublime,—are monuments also of the vulgar passion for novelty which seemed to raise them to the rank of European masterpieces, and lessons how brief the fame is, which rests on fashion and singularity without truth. For these pictures are false in every vital point; the *Belshazzar* in the size of structure, the *Red Sea* in the grotesquely-portentous waves, the *Fall* in the suppression of the characters. No painting so untrue can ever win its way deep, or touch us long; not if the artist 'mingles earth with sea, and sea with sky' in his colossal commonplace. But Danby rose afterwards to better work; and although Poetry with him was too rarely regarded as a higher mode of truth, yet in the wild waves and jagged cliff of the *Sea Shore* (230), the purple glens and rosy mountain-tops of the

Painter's Holiday (246), there is a solemn unity of sentiment which is genuinely poetical.

John Linnell's style has much analogy with Constable's, although his colouring is more varied and his drawing in some points more correct. He, too, has yielded to decided preference for one class of subjects, and Nature, by a law which holds good in many regions beside that of Art, seems hence to have bound his power within the narrow limits of a too-predominant manner. But Linnell tells his favourite tale of half-unreal shepherd or harvest life with much point, although we wish he would either throw his full strength into the figures, or subdue them to the landscape: his favourite wreath of rosy mist is drawn and coloured with rare excellence in 417, and the shifting rainy network which enlaces the moon is a passage of fine observation. Other familiar effects meet us in the rest; as the broken picturesque foreground in the *Sandpits* (398), with the clear white fleecy clouds above (this time hardly quite mastered),—the green abysses of sloping copse in the *Shepherds* (400). The *Saint John* (416), although the upper rocks are well drawn and the scene fairly imagined for effect, is not a fortunate deviation from Linnell's ordinary style; neither the wilderness nor the subject of the picture appear to have been truly grasped or even thought of, in the ruling wish to rival Poussin and the Carracci.—Landscapes by the younger Linnells, Stanfield, and Danby have considerable family merit, and the last has, more than his father, turned to reality; but they do not appear to require detailed notice.

Bonington and **Müller** died before reaching their full strength. They are alike in decided sense of colour, in the union of figures with landscape, in the variety of scenes which they attempted. The *Francis* (181) is a clever sketch; the *Coast Scene* (197) shows a mastery over air and space, which Bonington missed in the cold conventionalities of his *Venice* (179 and 182). Müller's work has all the charm of happy ease; his *Syrian Dance* (360) and *Baggage Waggon* (437) are the perfection of brilliant sketching: the *Rhodes* (387), though ashy and artificial in colour, has many delicate and truthful passages, and is arranged with the apparently instinctive facility which marked the painter. But we must pass to men who have been able to fulfil their promise.

No one who knows the gray heartless style in which Architecture was painted during the last two centuries, or the shadowy picturesqueness which has since been frequent, will refuse to value what **Roberts**

has done for us. He has made us familiar with the relics of the past in half the world where any art of Building has been practised :— even the small selection here shown ranges from Baalbec to Rome, from Milan to Flanders. His work is however seldom true in colour, —perhaps never thoroughly true,—although the *Basilica* (395) is pleasing in tone and masterly in management of light :— and a carelessness in avoiding artificial arrangement, a too ready reliance on facile handling, more or less mar the effect of the gorgeous *Milan* (388). —Roberts, with other later men, makes us feel how much spectators have profited through the far-wandering spirit of the Locomotive Age. That adventurous industry which has led him, with Lewis and Lear and Hunt, to meet Nature in the wilderness or History in the ruin is probably its own reward :—but it is our great gain also.

It is natural to see a contrast, honourable to both, between the mind of Turner and of **Stanfield** ; nor can we be better prepared to honour his stern realism, than by sympathizing with the poetry of Turner. Our specimens are excellent : the painter's magnificent mastery over the forms of mountain and of sea could not be better illustrated than by the *Tyrol* (362) and the *Holland* (421) : his powerful prose has never transmuted itself more nearly into poetry than in the *Abandoned* (377),—and this, by sheer truthfulness. Such pictures need small comment :—but, especially with reference to the work of Callcott, Collins, and Constable, I would beg for a little attention to the profoundly-real drawing of the mountain range and of the waves. Only the courage of truth would have suffered Stanfield to bar his Tyrolese scene with the horizontal vapour-lines above the valley ;—as only the grasp of truth could have enabled him to give in the one sea-piece the breaking wave with every sweet subtlety of its curvature, in the other, the spent weariness of storm throughout the drifted cloud-wreaths and heaving bosom of the waste waters which will soon take the Abandoned to her resting place.

Ward and Landseer have carried our noble Landscape art into another field. Those who have studied the points of bull and boar are said to consider Ward's rendering of them excellent :—but less learned visitors will at least receive an impression from these pictures (287 and 315) of extraordinary force and vital character. Here are no tricks of texture or happy accidents of detail and story ; we have the strange veiled spirit, or whatever it may be, of the creature before us, ' the sullen isolation of the brutal nature ; the dignity and quietness of the mighty limbs.' These works also are marked by a

quality in art as rare as it is high, — the complete self-surrender of the artist to his work. Their respective scales of size appear to render comparison between them idle; yet the *Boar* is as mighty as the *Bull*. This is truly to paint in the 'grand manner,'—and the whole English Gallery affords no more striking lesson to intelligent spectators.

Landseer's art lies generally in a different direction. It is the Incident Style applied to animals: it takes the dramatic points in their life. What keenness of imagination, what profound study are here required! what constant danger of transferring the workings of the Reason to the creatures of Instinct! It must be confessed that Landseer, in some of his character-scenes, has not wholly escaped this:—whilst in the *Bolton Abbey* (407) he has wasted his great powers on the idle profusion of lifeless game and indolent sensuality. Nature is apt to revenge herself on the true man, if he is unfaithful for a moment; Landseer is generally cold in colour;—but in this picture the charming picturesque touch which half-redeems that deficiency has also failed him.

Of very different merit is the *Abercorn Children* (409); as painting it hardly belongs to the same art as Gainsborough's or Sir Joshua's,—as a masterly design, it is one of the most charmingly imagined and tenderly felt scenes of Infancy in the Exhibition. The theme is one that rarely fails to lead the artist to the borders of sentimentalism and silliness:—an excellent lesson for its worthier treatment is given in the largeness and sweet repose of this truly noble romance of the Nursery.—But let us turn from the painter's less natural sphere to Landseer in the wilderness:—the mysterious solitude of the *Sanctuary* (427), the romantic gloom and rosy dawn of the *Combat* and the *Defeat* (405 and 406); the magnificent lines and free force of the *Monarch* and the *Fatal Fight* (1387 and 1388: Fourth Water-colours room); the glorious hillside panorama of the *Drive* (408).—It is in the vast series of which we see here a few that the true capacity of the painter shows itself. Others, certainly, have shadowed out more deeply than he the mysterious animal nature, and have brought to their pictures a finer sense of colour, a higher instinct for grace or for grandeur; but no painter has embraced a range nearly so extensive in animal representation, or, again, has gone into the active life of a few wild creatures with such imaginative and poetical sympathy. The fury of the lion had been painted by Rubens, the repose of the cattle by

Cuyp; but Landseer, it may be said, has grasped the story of the dog and the deer in its wholeness. His pictures differ from most others as the animals of Scott—the bloodhound of the *Lay*, or the Gustavus of the *Legend*—differ from the animals of the zoological treatise. We have, not a naturalist's summary of their likings and characteristics, but the romance of their lives; and this (in accordance with the analogy between Art and Literature) surrounded and set off by that bright background of landscape, or picturesque variety of accessories, by aid of which the great novelist also threw more vivacity and interest into the living characters of his immortal drama.

We now return to figure-painting; which takes mostly the Incident manner, but falls into a few general divisions; the half-historical, the classical, the slight or sentimental domestic style, the school of national character, and that which treats the rarer or more critical events of common life with seriousness. These lines cannot be drawn sharply: and our artists have often worked in more than one manner. And, although the list given may be fairly exhaustive, yet it should be remembered that almost every man has some gift of his own, large or small, which no one else equally shares in.

I have noticed already how much the treatment of Incident, as before defined, is a modern thing; and how curiously it coincides with the parallel outburst of the modern Tale and Lyrical narrative. **Bird** of Wolverhampton (1772-1819) appears to have been the first decided master of this style in England. To name his subjects is enough to mark out his tendency. We find *The Will*, the *Country Auction*, *The Raffle*, the *Saturday Evening*. A glance at the two latter (127 and 144) may explain why the Artist is little known: they are deficient in charm of colour and liveliness of touch. But they tell their story excellently, and what in this style is rare, without too much point in the telling; the groups are well-arranged, not overcrowded, and full of character. In the *Saturday Evening* it is a family party increased by a few neighbours who have come to practise the Psalm for tomorrow's display in the village-choir. How cleverly marked are the gradations in musical zeal and knowledge between the old enthusiast with the bass-viol and the yawning youngster who is only interested in the lesson as a duet with his sweetheart:—in the irritable Senior who is expelling the noisy child,—the couple whose political heat leads them to forget their music and their mugs together!

Many reasons have given **Wilkie** the fame denied to Bird. His

clear and picturesque, though artificial, colour, his careful drawing, his minute finish,—the thoughtful care with which he has filled every inch with incident, the vivid grasp of character by which the incident is supported,—these are powerful means to success. But he added another as powerful, not to be passed over, as it exemplifies the larger law of national sentiment which governs the course of Art. Precisely when Wilkie left the Manse in Fifeshire where he had been born and bred, and at the Academy Exhibition of 1806 ‘woke up and found himself famous’ through his *Village Politicians*,—the strongly coloured and peculiar points which had hitherto distinguished Scottish manners and character had been revealed to Englishmen by Burns. And the interest of this discovery was destined during the whole of Wilkie’s earlier career to be widened and strengthened by Scott. It is true that, of Scott’s contemporaries in art, Turner alone was able to reach the higher heights of that romantic genius;—yet these circumstances secured for work so good, within its own limits, as Wilkie’s, one main element of success in Painting,—true enjoyment of it. This is not likely to be wanting now;—for we see him here in the *Village Festival* (281), his most sweetly finished and purely painted piece; in the *Blindman’s Buff* (282) and the *Penny Wedding* (277), each a triumph of blythe animation and innocent revelry: in the *Fair* (278),—that masterwork of the student of nineteen or twenty, filled but not crowded with the one hundred and forty heads which he drew from life amongst his father’s parishioners and the neighbours of Pitlessie. To enumerate the touches of nature in these works would be almost to enumerate their figures: but I must give a word to the magnificent jollity of the old woman who is central in the *Wedding*, laughing in every line of her; and to the group in (282), where two delighted boys have seized the happy moment to hug the favourite of the house. One would like her to show her face, were it not engaged to so much better purpose.

Wilkie’s later style was formed under the united influence of ill-health, foreign travel, and admiration for some ancient masters. We can trace the spirit of modern Rome in the fine and pathetic *Confessional* (259); of Spain and of her great painter in the *Guerilla* subjects and the *Posada* (279, 280, and 283). These works, it is true, are remote indeed from the absolute mastery, the daylight directness, of the glorious Velasquez: yet they have a certain real breadth and largeness of style, nor is Wilkie’s early insight into character and

characteristic incident wanting. It has been a fashion to rate his later style very much beneath his earlier; it is 'imitation,' it is 'not nature.' But why not paint Spain, when living there, as Scotland when in Fifeshire? And, for an artist whose management of colour is always conventional, was it a descent, after following Ostade, to follow Velasquez?

Wilkie's own many followers show the weakness inherent in second-hand art:—but some ability and considerable care have gone into the elaborate scenes by **Duncan** and **Harvey** (296 and 441),—with whom we may place **Newton**; although the somewhat affected grace and sentimental tone of his works remind us that he lived in the age of Books of Beauty. His *Beggars' Opera* scene (329) appears the best here exhibited: it is a pleasant bit of colour and character.

Etty's admirable gifts for art were joined with singular inconsistencies. He was among the greatest, if not the greatest colourist of his time; drew carefully and studied much; had a deep sense of grace in line and feature, a profound feeling for landscape; and yet, through the subjects which he mainly treated, his magnificent painting fails in the truth of its appeal. He alone, of all his contemporaries, successfully devoted himself to represent the pure Human Form, which he painted with a brilliant transparency of colour rarely seen beyond the precincts of Venetian art. It is true that he tried portrait, landscape, sacred and historical subjects, often with happy, almost always with striking result; but his love for human form led him continually back to what may be called subjects of Fancy. This was unfortunate; for scenes from mythology, whether the genuine mythology of Greece, or that later artificial form which for three centuries has infested Europe,—can have for us no genuine and soul-stirring interest. Nor can it be said that Etty seized these subjects with a firm grasp: we see that he chose them, not as grounds for display in the sense of the vulgar artist, but with a passionate abandonment to the delight of line and the glory of colour; painting can hardly go further, but they are not thought-out also:—that modesty and unselfconsciousness which so often accompany great genius, were almost too predominant in his nature. The five colossal works, although much should be forgiven to attempts so arduous, display conspicuously the imperfection in serious grasp of subject alluded to. In the *Judith* series (352 to 354), nothing but the intensest impress of truthfulness could render such a tale of patriotic murder satisfactory; and although the heroine in the tent-scene bears

a noble expression, yet in most other points these, with the *Mercy* and the *Benaiah*, are (at least to the writer) only gorgeous displays of technical skill and academic grouping,—whilst in the *Judith*, the colour wants the usual transparency of the Master, the ‘light from within,’ and the figures are shown in broad white clearness, on a background of midnight purple. There is little of the world before the flood or the world of Homer in the two *Dances* (336 and 419): in the *Hylas* (335) the point of the legend is missed: what we see is a party of girls persuading a reluctant comrade to bathe, not the overmastering allurements of the stream to youth, the divinity of the running water, as we read of it in the old poem—‘We are not the only ones, my friend, for whom the God created Love, as we were wont to fancy; we are not the first who found Beauty beautiful’; and how at the fountain overgrown with maidenhair and parsley in the dell ‘the ever-wakeful Nymphs, Eunice and Malis and Nycheia at once laid all their hands on Hylas, and he went headlong hurrying into the dark water, as a red star which falls from Heaven into the sea, precipitate.’ . . . What passion and colour does Theocritus set before us here! To paint his Idyll truly would have foiled Giorgione himself. It is enough respectfully to note the want of serious aim which mars the excellence of one of his greatest descendants: and we may then enjoy to the full the exquisite poetry and feeling of the landscape in the *Hylas*, the *Homeric Dance*, and the *Nymph*,—perhaps on the whole Etty’s greatest work, as it was also his gift on election by the Academy to which he was attached so strongly.—Or, turning to more important points, what a blended force and tenderness of tint, what a lavish beauty in line and feature he gives us everywhere! There is a prodigality of these fine qualities about the *Cleopatra* (374) alone, enough to stamp the artist as a *Painter* in a sense which few have exceeded. Nor is it easy to find a more complete contrast to Etty as colourist or as poet, than we can see in *Paton’s Oberon and Titania* (389):—a monument of lifeless industry, and of the ghastly incredible conceits which never fail to mark the imaginations of the unimaginative man.

Westall, **Smirke**, and **Howard**, chose often the same subjects of fancy as Etty, but from lesser power rarely carried them beyond ornamentalism. We see in these men the affectation of the time when the art of Lawrence was fashionable. Something of this appears also in the later works of a far higher name, **Stothard**. But what in others arose from want of strength, in him is rather the

excess of that peculiar and personal grace which he gave to all he touched. The *Charity* and *Canterbury Pilgrims* (167 and 172) are hardly more than sketches: but there is not a line in them which is not poetical.

No English work for the first forty or fifty years of this century equals **Mulready's** drawing; the absolute perfection of line in the children of the *Hay-field* (299), the dog in 303, and throughout the *Bathers* (301), makes us feel to the utmost the impassable though often almost imperceptible gulf between the designing of a real Master and that of minor draughtsmen. His power over character is less certain; the figures of Burchell and the nearest Bather seem not quite worthy of the exquisite skill and devoted industry which render these little canvasses 'more precious than rubies'; nay the last picture leaves us in doubt whether the scene be England, or some one of 'the shores of old Romance' spoken of by another Poet. But in whatever world we are, it has a sunny loveliness, a holy calm, of which Mulready gives us glimpses everywhere in his landscape-backgrounds. The same intensity of feeling which pervades his colour and his drawing, often animates his story;—see the united fear and courage of the noble child in the picture with the Lascar beggars, where every line is of Grecian grace and severity, and the admirable speakers of the *Whistonian Controversy* (300). 'Look at the good-humoured obstinacy, the absurd excellent logic written in the Vicar's features:—'Confute me in argument, child! cried I, you mistake there, my dear. I believe there are but few that can do that; I never dispute your abilities at making a goose pie, and I beg you'll leave argument to me.'

Goldsmith and his delightful humour lead us straight 'in a concatenation accordingly' to the last of the great Masters in our earlier school of Incident. **Leslie** may be truly named so; and yet his work must always forcibly remind us that he wanted one of those qualities which are essential to true Painting, and was without complete mastery of another. His drawing of the figure cannot be placed near Mulready's; and his colour is worse than valueless. We should injure our own judgment and do no honour to Leslie by overlooking these defects: nay, the more truly we feel them, the more vividly shall we be likely to follow the charming Humourist into the many subtle delicacies of his modest art. Whether he adds to the wealth of Shakspeare in the *Merry Wives*, or makes a

Children's carriage a great event by the ingenuous solemnity of his treatment, his work differs from that of minor men as the wit of Lamb or Addison from the *Adelphi farce*, whilst his sentiment is unforced and natural in the same degree if we compare it with the melodramatic effects which are the besetting sin of the Incident manner. The scene from the '*Spectator*' (355) must be one of his earliest works; Leslie had not then reached the skill and lightness of touch with which, not long before his death, he painted the same congregation during sermon-time; but Addison would have accepted at once, we may fancy, the group of the mysterious Widow, so demure and so sentimental, and her admirably-drawn children,—for realizations of his idea such as any great writer very rarely receives from Art. Nothing perhaps, is so uncommon as a true Illustration to good Prose or Poetry; the artist,—painter, or sculptor, or musician,—by some natural law almost always (promising as such a class of subjects may seem,) sinks below his author; look at the vignettes to the *Waverley novels*, or *Miss Austen's*, or *Milton*; of the many who have tried, few indeed have entered with Leslie into the real spirit of Addison or Sterne or Cervantes. But he entered into it, because he shared it. The scene from *Don Quixote* (311) is one of his least finished works; it can never have been pleasing in tone, and has now suffered by the 'chilling' of the varnish: yet nothing here has more vivid strokes of Leslie's thoughtful humour:—How far this is from any suggestion of the stage or the acted picture; how remote and Spanish the air of the landscape;—how highbred and poetically gallant the ragged Don, how arch and tender the Dorothea!

With this, in sterling qualities, I would place the *Dinner at Ford's House* (356); a scene which few hands but Leslie's could have ventured to add to Shakspeare. We must suppose that it is the fulfilment of Ford's invitation (A. iii: S. 2), 'I beseech you heartily, some of you go home with me to dinner, you shall have sport, I will show you a monster'; for a half-gleam, suspicious of meditated treachery seems, or hardly seems, so delicately given are the shades of expression,—to flicker in the triumphant visage of the 'poor unvirtuous fat knight,'—a faint foreboding of the buck-basket. But like every great artist, Leslie tells his own tale best;—with Hogarth's, I leave it to the spectator's study.

Webster carries much of Mulready's manner into scenes of common life, which he has painted with unpretending quiet and simplicity. The subdued tones of his cottage rooms, the clear daylight of his

landscape backgrounds are in perfect harmony with his style of subject. He is especially happy in children; the little girl on the left in the *Sunday Evening* (624 : Third room) is excellent. Come what may, she will commit the sin of smiling.

It is creditable to English art that, with a few unhappy exceptions, our Religious Painting has avoided that snare of Imitation which has produced so much hopeless and valueless work in modern France and Germany. Hogarth and Reynolds each looked in his own way at these subjects; and the latter threw into his *Holy Family*, his *Samuel*, and other kindred pictures such an ineffable tenderness of feeling as goes far to redeem their want of grasp and realization. **Eastlake's** religious art lies in the same direction; his *Christ and the Children* (366) has great delicacy in sentiment and graceful charm, and is coloured with uncommon transparency and sweetness. We see similar qualities, enforced with more brilliant daylight tints, in the *Scio* and the *Escape of Carrara* (368 and 367): — works which, with others by this Master, have carried the spirit of the modern Romance from simple domestic Incident into scenes of foreign manners and adventure.

Penry Williams, Uwins, and Hurlstone have also taken Italian life for their special subject. The two *Festa* pieces (744 and 227) are pretty specimens of picturesqueness and vivid colour, with a certain natural grace, which, however, verges on affectation. Hurlstone's brilliant roguish *Peasant boys* (369) have not escaped this fault. In truth, like most pictures of local life not by men 'to the manner born,' these fail by giving only the ornamental or festive side of Italy. The *Saltmarshes* by **Mason** (747), in the Fourth room, though rather blurred in handling, goes far more into the soul of peasant life: there is a true glow of poetry not less than of colour about the straining cattle, the wild pines, and the purple threatening of the horizon.

A heaviness in colour and a total want of common ragged picturesqueness have partially obscured the high merits of **Maclise**. Everything in his work has an air of newness; it looks hard-cut and unfeeling. Yet his *Caxton and Edward IV* (413) is a masterly historical piece, a real commentary on the times when the great material engine of the change from Feudalism to modern life was slowly framing itself. Perhaps the face of Edward hardly does justice to the most marked 'man of genius' who sat on a throne which has held so many mighty occupants: but the fair voluptuous

Queen, the bright children, born to so sad a future, the gloomy brother, the considerate Rivers (in armour on the left), the monk behind him with bowed head and clasped hands, — the man of the Past age and the men of the Coming,—are admirably rendered. And it is eminently pleasant to observe that Maclise in these works shows that rare proof of power,—consistent advance. The *Edward* is superior to the able but theatrical *Macbeth* (414), and this in turn takes a much higher aim than the somewhat prosaic fancy of the *Puck* (415) or the stage-horrors and boudoir beauty of the *Mokanna* (364).

The works of a few other artists, living or lately dead, have been also admitted within the First room. **D. Scott's** thoughtful though imperfectly-executed pictures (220 and 323) deserve a steady examination: they are clearly by a man of very unusual force. The *Paracelsus* (220) is an excellent illustration of the strange position in which the great chemists of the Middle Ages stood, half-way between science and charlatanry: the *Gloucester* (323) is imagined with much grandeur and tragic solemnity. **Leighton's** *Roman Girl* (429) is a truly artist-like work in a fine free style. The child-scenes by **Witherington** and **Mrs. Wells** (425 and 431) are praiseworthy, the *Hop Garden* for grace, the *Crusade* for earnest feeling; and both are pleasantly coloured.—**Lear's** striking landscapes are examples of the modern accurate style: the conscientious working-out of the *Cedars* especially should be noticed. One is glad that so famous a group should have received such careful portraiture.

I may lastly notice the beautifully imagined and excellently finished *Labourer's Return* (438). It is low in tone, and hence misses attractiveness of effect at a first glance: yet, beside subtlety in detail united to largeness of style,—it has the rare merit of entire freedom from sentimentalism or over-ingenuity in telling its story. **Arthur Hughes** is one of our very few truly poetical painters:—it is satisfactory to close with the name of a man who works in this spirit my imperfect notice of the many treasures contained in this great Gallery.

SMALLER ROOMS

SCHOOLS of art, useful as they are in forming taste and handing down technical methods, are dangerous from the encouragement they give to second-hand and imitative work. The style and the subjects of successful leaders set the fashion; the painters and the public are pleased with variations on a favourite theme;—until in place of pure honest art drawn fresh from reality, we have a deluge of dilution from other men's fountains. We in England cannot indeed understand the praise which the copyist of Raphael and Poussin is apt to obtain abroad; but painting imitated from a well-established style of painting is often popular here; and the triumph of such work is much aided by the imbecile habit of criticizing art by art. To say whether a painter is true, requires thought and reference to reality; but it is easy and creditable to our learning to compare him with other painters. Artists meanwhile crowd with alacrity into so safe and smooth a road to glory,—varying their imitations by ingenious tricks of hand, or animating them by false wit and vulgar sentiment. Much of the art I have now to notice appears to fall into this secondary class;—some even to fall below it into sheer coarseness or vacuity. If the judgment seems severe, it should be remembered that it is hardly more than saying that such work is not great work—so always rare—; that men are apt to take copying the steps of Genius for following them; that there is a natural temptation to do little things in a little manner. This last is the besetting risk of our favourite modern styles: yet some form of smaller art is, in fact, inevitable in all ages; it will have its place; only when popularity wishes to proclaim it as Excellence is it worth while to say 'Pardon us.' But it is often creditable in its way, and if the artist be sincere and unpretentious, may recall a happy remembrance or awake a pleasant thought. It is no slight labour, and no slight praise, to have done this, even though Truth may be unable to allow more; and Truth will reward us with the gift of enjoying it far more genuinely. We shall find much to value well, when we have decided never to overvalue: the better we judge, the more justice we shall do to what Phillip, and Faed, and Frith, O'Neil, and Elmore, have here given us: whilst in Egg, Leighton, and others, we may recognize a higher attempt or a more serious promise. And

we shall free ourselves at once from what is only feeble and false; with all the clever reasons for admiring such pictures as Ward's *Whitehall*, Frost's *Narcissus*, Stone's *Cross-purposes*, Paton's *Return Home*, Cope's and Hart's impertinences to Shakspeare, the lurid sentimentalism of Herbert, and the fair follies of Baxter.

When second-hand and conventional Art has run its course for awhile, one of those changes will always occur, which, in proportion as the pores of the soul are stopped, and her wings clipped (to use Plato's fine figure), or not, we shall consider Reaction or Advance. Men will weary of mannerism and repetition, and clever commonplace in sentimentalism or vivacity, turn to the one Beauty that has never betrayed the heart that loved her, and draw their art direct from Nature. I shall not pretend to doubt that this change is an advance, and a glorious one: it is a move towards the manner of Shakspeare and Homer and Dante, and their kindred;—even if it comes in the morbid form of poor Rousseau, we feel in it something of the breath of life;—yet when applied to the Fine Arts, to follow Nature unquestionably opens its own chapter of dangers. The picture may aim at too simply reproducing its original, it may imitate so closely that the human Thought and Feeling, which separate Fine Art from the lifeless perfection of the photograph (invented by a strange coincidence as if at once to aid and to mislead), shall hold almost no place in the work. Or again, from the limited means of Art, in the finish of the details, the total effect may be lost; or the sense of the artist's labour may overpower to us the pleasure of the work: we may feel that in his satisfaction with the simple truth, he has forgotten that not every scene or subject is worth painting. These accessory evils have been exhibited by several of the men who during the last ten or twelve years have thrown off the prevalent conventionalism of modern art; had it not been so, Youth and Inexperience and Discovery of new ways would have been exempted by a kind of miracle from their natural perplexities. It cannot be too clearly borne in mind, that although a false style may ruin a great artist, yet that a true style will not create one; only a mighty mind will produce mighty work: Antaeus the giant in the old story renewed his vigour when he touched Mother Earth,—but it was a giant who touched her;—yet even under the limitations alluded to, so great has been the strength which even lesser men have drawn from Nature, so marked and convincing their success, that already their manner has attracted its false followers (as Paton) or its imperfect

imitators (as Dyce).—But when a healthy style, call it Advance or Reaction, is in the hands of real genius, we have at once the conditions of such triumph as has been achieved by the *Huguenot* of Millais, or the *Saviour in the Temple* of Hunt. These works are not here, but we have several of similar quality. And to bring the subject back to the broad divisions of our modern School, it may lastly be noticed that the greater earnestness which is inseparable from fidelity to Nature, has been followed and rewarded by a deeper conception and grasp of Subject, whether Landscape or Incident. The Incident Style, especially, has taken hence a scope so much wider, that it passes with Hunt into the passionate romance of the *Sylvia* (728), with Martineau becomes a tragedy of common life in the *Manor House* (727), with Hughes is elevated to the poetry of the *Labourer's Return* (438).—If these men have the patient devotedness to be faithful to themselves, the Future of English Art is with them.

These general remarks may absolve me from attempting to characterize as a whole the style of those who here give us either their matured aim or their youthful promise. But I will add brief notices of the most conspicuous works, beginning with the left-hand wall of the SECOND ROOM.

Here **Archer's Child's Party** (574) will be an agreeable surprize to many : it is not carried very far, and the colour a little wants lightness and gradation, but there are few pieces of equally honest unaffected work in subjects of the kind. That must have been a pleasant day in Gloucestershire with these unspoiled English children ;—if Mr. Archer has the secret which makes him a welcome guest in such companies, we hope it will not be the last in which he lets us share.

Carrick's more elaborate art is far less genuine. The *Home* (575) is dexterously composed, and the draperies drawn with care,—almost with power : yet the sentiment verges on that rock of the Incident style, melodramatic commonplace. When we descry this quality in Art, even from afar, untruth or weakness are rarely distant. So in Carrick's *Anxiety* (424 : First room) we have to ask with what we are to sympathize ? It cannot be the vulgar fear which an Archangel expressed to Adam, 'lest dinner cool,' for the window shows darkness without, and the shadows are certainly not thrown by the sun : but again it cannot be past one at night, for the room is shown by clear daylight. Or is it true art, to leave the woman's face in woeful blankness, and settle all the labour on the foldings of her shawl ?

With **Frost** we have to regret skill wasted on pure ornamentalism. Spenser and Milton are not to be illustrated on these old easy terms (551 and 531),—pretty looks, and impossible draperies, and ballet-attitudes,—Etty shorn of strength and glory.

Passing with pleasure from these works, — with a word of hearty praise to the effect of **Dillon's** mighty Egyptian statues, 'moulded in colossal calm' (550), and the modest care and thoughtful rendering of **Holiday's Burgess of Calais** (542),—we reach a more serious attempt in **F. M. Brown's Lear** (549). This is the first worthy tragic illustration of Shakspeare we have met with; the figure of the old King leaves nothing to be desired in attitude or expression; it is truly the sudden calm after the long agitation. The other heads, though wisely subdued, with the landscape glimpse, show the same grasp of the subject and are painted with scrupulous thought and completeness. The Cordelia is unsatisfactory; but something must be forgiven when the attempt is so arduous, and the success in general so great. Leslie's art is very different from Brown's; but I hope it will be observed how closely they are allied in one vital point,—that they re-create the scene direct from the Poet, not through the Stage. This is an absolute condition of success in dramatic illustration, whether by Painter or Sculptor, and no skill in art will for a moment cover its non-observance.

Much of the same force and originality appears in Brown's other pictures,—nor with less could he have grappled so well with the literal truth of his *Autumn Afternoon from Hampstead* (533), or with that difficulty of difficulties, trees realized in colour under sunlight. This landscape should be compared with Constable's by those who have thought the writer's assertion that his trees are not really *drawn*, ungrounded. It will not please so much, for it attempts what the very limited means of colour cannot reproduce with such *relative* fidelity; but look again, and you will find the very flush and glow of the late summer day in every tint, and each tree maintaining its own modest but clearly-marked individuality. Is not this Nature's way? So in the *Last of England* (516) we have not the general effect only of our English weather given, but the rainy air itself beating once more on the Emigrants, as they steam southward for the lights of La Hogue and the Bay.

Few will leave this room without a glance at **Marks'** humorous sketch (518), and **Leighton's Cimabue** (541);—both excellent illustrations of European art six centuries since. No wonder that the

men of those times left so many fine things in the church and the cathedral, within and without, when their labour could raise such delight and enthusiasm. This *Madonna* was counted in its day one of the first clear steps taken towards a national style in Italy, and the story runs that the joy of the people named the way by which it was carried to Santa Maria Novella, *Borgo Allegri*. By Cimabue the painter walks the great Giotto, his pupil, then just taken from the sheepfolds of Vespignano; their road is strewn with flowers before them, and Dante stands watching the procession go by, with sad memories of the lost love, and how the people had been wont to cry 'Miracle,' when she passed along the streets of Florence. . . . Few of our own painters have chosen subjects which carry one into such regions of romance as this, or have given so fair a promise of excellence in design and expression. The children and the two singers who follow them,—Primavera, perhaps, (readers of the 'Vita Nuova' may fancy), or Vanna and the poet Cavalcanti, or it may be Beatrice de' Bardi with Simone,—are especially beautiful.

From this poetical art we turn, passing two landscapes by **W. Linnell**, steadily composed and painted from Leath-Hill materials (519 and 625), and two pieces of smooth prettiness by **M. Innes** and **Smith** (506 and 508), to the *Hedger* of **Brett** (492):—with his *Val d' Aosta* (481), the most literally realized pictures in the collection. 'I never saw the mirror so held up to nature,' writes the possessor of the *Aosta*, 'but it is Mirror's work, not Man's.' There is not altogether such an absence of human feeling, (I do not refer to the figure only), in the wood-scene; yet certainly these remarkable pictures are the nearest approach hitherto made to what would be the perfect photograph:—both mathematically true, the fallen trees and the standing, the vineyards and the rocks, 'even to their finest serration, yet not, in the strong, essential meaning of the word, a noble picture. Keeness of eye and firmness of hand as much as you choose; but of emotion, or of intention, nothing traceable.' It would hardly be fair not to add what follows: 'There is no such subtle and precise work on any other canvass here,' (Royal Academy Exhibition of 1859). 'The chesnut-trees are like a finished design of Durer's; every leaf a study: the poplar trunks and boughs drawn with an unexampled exquisiteness of texture and curve.'

W. Davis's admirable *Harrowing* (483) carries us back to the true poetry of nature again,—he is one of the very few living landscape-painters who put this quality into their work, in contradistinction to

the prettiness or picturesqueness we have so much of. Indeed this quality is so rare, that it is a kind of effort to rise from the slight easy pleasure which such a style as **Hulme's** (463 and 504) will give, and do justice to the tender and elevated simplicity of the *Harrowing*. At a first glance this picture will perhaps appear incomplete or harsh; but presently we shall see the details of the foreground come out with the strange united keenness and confusion of dawning in all its 'clear-obscurity';—there is the smell of the fresh earth and early rain about us, whilst further on, the struggling crystalline whiteness of an April morning is coming up over the horizon, and piercing the dun veil of cloud with fitful light. Everything is finished, but nothing finished too far; observe the balanced perplexity and sharpness of the distant trees, the gradation in the unravelling web of the sky, the rich dewy purple of the earth. It is only a little square of homely truth; yet this is truly great Art, let it come before us never so humbly.

The *Windsor* (480), with its companion picture, and two or three more in the First room, will be looked at with a deeper and a more affectionate interest than Art can awaken. But this is one of Landseer's most gracious scenes of indoor life: in the happy child and happy parents some image of 'the tender grace of a day' which, we may trust, has not passed altogether, has been successfully rendered.

Except the younger **Danby's** faithfully-studical *Gwynant* (456) this room need not detain us longer; for **O'Neill's** Incident pictures (458 and 462) here shown do not go beyond clever careful commonplace, and the marvellously delicate details of Hughes's *Ophelia* (466) are at present placed beyond examination.

THIRD ROOM. **Paton's** *Return from the Crimea* (708) has been noticed in general terms of censure. It is unspeakably unpleasant to write thus; yet the picture is not less than utterly false;—false in its sentiment, for is the lassitude of the wounded as they lay at Inkerman the natural, even the possible, condition in which any true-hearted soldier would be found, when home from the hospital with his family?—equally false in its art, which, spite of all its finish, is the smooth vulgarity of china-ware, with a texture and a tone between polished oak and leather. **Egg's** scene from *Esmond* (707) has the disadvantage of appealing to a book to clear up its story, in addition to the risk which attends all attempts at simple illustration. But it is painted with a fine manly feeling and glow of colour; the

head of the heartless young Beatrice behind, with its insane frivolous haughtiness, appears especially well given. And similar praise is due to the *Pepys* (660) further on. **Goodall's** scene of Italian life (709), from Chioggia, the fishing-port of Venice, has less force in thought and execution; the effect is pleasant, but there is a want of glow and depth. His *Firstborn* (548: in the Second room) is more forcible.—Cervantes is a writer of such blended force and delicacy that very few artists can touch him with success. Amongst these we cannot include **Horsley**: who is seen to less disadvantage in his *Madrigal* (701) than in the *Burning of the Books* (697). His *Milton* (536) is a higher flight, and a more conspicuous failure: yet work such as this, honest in its aim, and unaffected in its colour, is a healthy thing compared with the vague postures and brown mannerism on which **Poole**, in his *Philomena* and *Solomon Eagle* (591 and 578) has wasted what might have been power. There is true poetry and feeling in his work; but want of drawing and want of truth have left it in the region of haze and theatrical sentiment.

E. M. Ward and **Elmore** have chosen their subjects from history: but here the one common rule holds, that the rank of a man's work depends neither upon his subject, nor his theory, nor his intention, but wholly on the force he has put into it. A simple child, like Reynolds's *Sophia*, a heath by Crome, or a boar-pig by James Ward, are pictures in the 'great manner,' in a sense quite different from the *Marie Antoinette* (706), the *Charles V* (683), and the *Tuileries* (682). These do not rise above the ordinary Incident style, although Elmore has a certain easy grace, and Ward a certain rude power. But when we have to couple words as in the foregoing phrases, the Adjective has a fatal facility of at last overmastering the Substantive. The head of the old Emperor in 683 has good character; the Queen of the *Tuileries* is attacked, and defends herself with some spirit, though this frightful beldame passion and impotent pride are hardly fit matters for Art; but on the whole, over-easy painting has left Elmore's work in the stage of a pleasant sketch, indicating daylight and suggesting subject, but realizing neither. In Ward's, the power shown in the handling already verges on coarseness, the sentiment in the face and hands of the poor wretched woman on melodramatic vulgarity; whilst in the *Charlotte Corday* (583) and the *Clarendon* (729) we can only observe, with much regret, the progress through these unfavourable qualities downward,—till in *Whitehall at the Death of Charles II* (749) we reach a meretriciousness of colour and

a vulgarity of sentiment and character (besides the slovenliness in handling), which might have commended themselves to Nell Gwyn or 'Madam Carwell' during the later stages of their popularity.

Power wasted is one of the world's saddest spectacles; but such work as **Cope's** *Othello* and *Lear* (705 and 651) affords a more pitiable sight—scenes in which Shakspeare has put forth all his inspiration, handled by total incapacity for poetical painting.

Othello

—My story being done,

She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:

She swore, *In faith 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange,*

'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful——

—What of the romance and tenderness of this scene, of the ineffable passion and force of *Lear*, appear in 705 and 651?—Cope's other works only cannot be ranked so low, because their subjects are less ambitious; but the gaudiness of the *Sisters* (652), and the wax-work of the *Elizabeth* (534), might have been excused, if the artist had been content to spare Shakspeare.

Criticism also is 'mix'd, as life is mix'd, with pain:' let us take the comfort of better things. **Calderon's** *Gaoler's Daughter* (694) is an honest piece of work, telling its little story of sentiment well, and effectively coloured. The *Marriage Offer* (756), elsewhere, is equally fortunate in its unaffected humour. To an English eye these pictures look very true to French peasant-character, which Goodall's water-colour Breton-scenes certainly do not.—Calderon is more or less influenced by the careful modern manner. We may trace this also in **Wells'** bright and pleasing *Portrait* (487), and in the landscapes of **Cooke**. I am not sufficiently Arctic to be able to judge the truth of his *Terror* (668); but the *Scheveling* (693) is one of the best bits of surf and shore painting on the walls for the run and hoarse thrusting of the sea, and beautifully managed lines of the brig and her rigging. Cooke's work, like Stanfield's, gives us what may be called the poetry of plain prose, and is therefore rather less successful when he tries what needs such ethereal fusion of colour as a Venetian sunset (653):—But better be reminded of Turner by absence of rivalry than find his ghost before us in the *Rome* and *Florence* (679 and 754) of **Pyne**. **Redgrave's** selection of scene in his little picture (696) is happy; **Severn's** *Ophelia* (704) picturesquely arranged, and the figure pleasing and unaffected; but the passion of madness does not seem to be here. **Lee's** landscape stands by that of the 'better brothers' as

Wright's of Derby by Gainsborough's: his clay-heap rocks and inky waves in the *Storm* (656), and hard unfeeling trees of the *Avenue* (676) show how little value paint may have, when it is all that the painter gives us. The *Plymouth* (785) and the landscape in the Second room (457) are less crude in execution, and the subjects more fortunately chosen.

Frith's work is exactly of the kind which gains the favour of the day for an artist. The execution is clear, clean, and dexterous, although dependent for effect too much on painting-up the foreground, and sketching in the distance. There is none of the mystery or the rich indecision of Nature about his pictures; their daylight seems to exist by itself, without interference from sun or air, those perplexities of the ordinary painter. They look like miniature models in colour; we cannot say that drawing so careful is not good; yet the whole difference of Mastery lies between what satisfies Frith and what, perhaps, hardly satisfies Mulready. In the subjects, we find the Incident style in its highest popular perfection; a little sentiment, and a little wit, and a very little humour;—but much of the fashions and the photograph;

—The squares and streets
And the faces that one meets,—

the outside of them, that is, and as much as one sees of coats and crinolines in passing. To describe the *Ramsgate* (665) would be an impertinence; it would seem to imply that the artist had left something in it which could not be understood without Thought. If there be nothing here which we can call by so serious a name, we have at least a gay triumph of clever common-place; although no one touch, perhaps, equals that of the doll-wife already grinning on her pillow, and dividing the child's fancy with his prayers, in the *Bed-time* (664). Absence of vital character and missing of the point will be found in the scenes from Scott and the Spectator by those who are sufficiently interested to study them.

We must deeply regret that so distinguished a Master as **Millais** in Colour and Expression should only be truly represented here by the *Return of the Dove* and the *Autumn Leaves* (650 and 698): works which from a certain immaturity in the first, and the slightness of the subject in the second, do but imperfect justice to his powers. Yet these are both stamped with the character of greatness. The *Return* singularly unites severity of line with tenderness of feeling;—qualities so

rarely found together, that the union may be accepted without hesitation as a mark of excellence. The head of the younger daughter, and the action of the hands are models of how true passion expresses itself,—how tremulously, how undemonstratively. The drawing and execution of the dresses and of the straw beneath have a force and perfection which we shall only find equalled by Holman Hunt. In the *Autumn Leaves* it is the Colour which raises the work to greatness; 'the glow within the darkness' of twilight; it is also most picturesquely arranged; but already we see that neglect of the human face in comparison with the rest of the painting, which in the *Spring Blossoms* and *Vale of Rest* (699 and 649) is so marked that,—whilst we think of this,—they hardly appear pictures by the artist of the *Return*, the *Release*, and the *Huguenot*. Yet in beauty of colour and wealth of invention these also are mighty works; the clear, cold, palpable air in the *Vale* alone would stamp it with masterliness;—like the gifted Solitary described by Wordsworth, the painter of them, we feel, has still kept

'Mid much abasement, what he had received .
From Nature, an intense and glowing mind.

—Let us hope he will again do justice to himself. Such powers are a national treasure, and we cannot afford to lose it.

In **Lucy's** historical picture (618) the merits of the manly unaffected design are partially obscured by the colouring, which wants relief. As a fresco painting it would take high rank: the rough humours of the first European Communists are well given, and the glimpse of old London shows what we have lost in picturesque homeliness by the architecture of Baker Street and Belgravia. His *Nelson* (310) has qualities equally meritorious. **Watts'** early work (675) displays the painter to great disadvantage: the name is the only thing which seems to connect it definitely with English history; we are in a kind of no-man's-land, haunted by reminiscences of Michel Angelo misapplied, where people without recognizable character of face, or dresses belonging to any human fashion, are doing nothing with vast energy. But the fine portraits of *Tennyson* and *Lawrence* (567 and 568) may atone for this phantasmagoric *Alfred*.

Egg's *Tale of Terror* (638), with Miss **A. Mutrie's** *Flower-groups* (641 and 642), appear to illustrate two opposite conditions in Art, either of which partially robs it of the power to give noble pleasure. The Flowers have too little evidence of human feeling; the Tale, too

much. In spite of the backgrounds, Miss Mutrie's work hardly rises above very perfect ornamentalism, and, like **Lance's**, leaves us unimpressed and cold; whilst this lurid story of faithlessness and death (besides a certain indistinctness in the telling), although there is a terrible force about it, wants nobleness in the moral, together with those happier glimpses which Hogarth rarely withholds. **Gale's** very delicate and thoughtful *Prisoner* (639) is an example how much, in art, a poetry of treatment can redeem the sadness of the subject. The modest effective colour of this little work is in harmony with the conception:—in both points it contrasts with **Rankley's** rather commonplace childhood-scene (643). **Dawson's** *Palace of Westminster* (644), although too much has been attempted, shows originality and feeling.

Passing the door, we reach **Lewis' Kibob Shop** (to be presently noticed) and **Dobson's Fairy Tales** (636). There is a pretty seriousness and very natural air about the little student, not altogether absent from the Scripture scene (633) above. But this holy sentimentalism, like **Le Jeune's Blessing** (455) and **Herbert's Outcast** (659) and *Magdalenes* (657 and 658), with Ary Scheffer's work in the sacred style, stands in the same relation to real Art as Longfellow's or Haynes Bayley's to real Poetry, and in the case of the painters named, is unredeemed by charm or value in the execution. So one falsehood brings with it more. It is pleasant to turn from this to the unpretending charm and homely truthfulness of **Clark's** family scene (625): with the *Sick Child* (510: in the Second room), two of our best recent pictures of cottage-incident. The drawing and colour in these little works are careful; the face of the puzzled father, unwilling to acknowledge his skill in draughts beaten by his boy's,—and that of the child, half afraid and half coaxed into courage, both excellent. The details and technical disposition are, perhaps, too ingeniously artificial. **Clark's Wanderer** (739: Fourth room) is a much less thorough piece of work in most ways; we trust he will not be satisfied to do himself less than justice in future.

An interesting series of Landscape follows. The old school of picturesque effect is almost always pleasingly represented in **Harding's** work; his distant mountain-ranges deserve special praise for the delicacy of their colouring and the exquisite rendering of their curves,—qualities admirably exemplified in the Alp-view (495). In the *Angers*, the central bridge has uncommon picturesqueness, both from its outline, and the low point of sight chosen: the entire

canvas (the sky excepted) is full of good motives,—indeed, like much of Harding's work, it suffers from its own abundance. How rarely his pictures, as wholes, with all their grace and knowledge, have the irresistible look of the *real thing*! Not so with **Hook**, whose Sea-pieces owe much of their charm to their unity of sentiment and individual character of scene. Little in these works is thoroughly done in the full force of the words; it is impossible not to wish, above all, that thorough drawing in the figures were added to Hook's beautiful colour and originality in situation: we cannot help remembering the remark of the downright critic in the tale, that 'the picture would have been better, if'——But the poetry and life and salt sunny heaving of Hook's delightful seas, the golden summer glow of his landscape (615) allure one with a good will from the unpleasant task of criticism;—and it is no little praise, when a painter makes us feel, that he could have 'taken more pains' with advantage.—How strange, also, that, before this artist, no one should have truly felt the gladness and glory of our blue waters! When we further observe, that his pictures are almost alone in grasping the life of sailors and country-people,—not as a scene of rude humour, or sentimentalism, or misery, but under the sunshine of innocent cheerfulness,—it will be seen what thanks we owe to Hook for the noble pleasure which his Art gives us so lavishly.

We have another genuinely English Landscape Painter in **Creswick**. His fine Trent Valley (611), with its Passing Cloud and wet hazy glimmer of sunlight on the Mill, is as true to our open earth and sky as the *Greta* (759) to the green depths and over-arching tracery of our mountain-torrents. In both works we find that industrious and tender *drawing* of the landscape which is so marked a feature in the present English school; observe in the *Greta* the graceful trees which break away into natural avenue on the right, and in the *Cloud* the value which has been given to the slight elevation of Belvoir, by the truthful treatment of the long levels through which the river winds to the horizon. All Creswick's work shows evidence of this conscientious modest care; his painting is never slurred over in design or execution; it always deserves the study, which his somewhat monotonous colour, and a rather too-equal diffusion of interest over the scene, may lead hasty spectators to neglect. But the *Ford* (601) is in a richer key; the delicate warmth of the sky is here beautifully contrasted with the cool green spaces beneath.

Naish and **Dyce**, in contrast with **Creswick** and **Harding**, bring us

to the later style again. The *Kynance Cove* (621) is as truthful in its lines as in the brilliant colouring of sea and serpentine; the painter does a bold thing who confronts such an effect, which will always seem exaggerated to those who do not happen to know the purple and emerald waters that wash twice daily the silver sands and gorgeous caverns of the Lizard. In **Dyce's** later pictures, the *Pegwell* (613) and the *Titian* (596), there is a microscopic accuracy and refinement of drawing which are of the highest value in Art, when balanced and, as it were, corrected at every point by imaginative power. But of Imagination we have here no trace. Nothing can be more truthful than the separate passages which in the *Bay* fail to compose a picture in the high sense: the anatomy of the rock on the right, and of the ebb-surfaces in the centre, is admirable; but there is no feeling for the poetry of the dying day, nothing of the confusion and mystery and indefinable life of Nature. The miniature making-out of the girl and child in the middle distance, and much of the foliage in the *Titian*, appear to me perfect examples of finish misunderstood, whilst in the trees the intricacies of real leafage, both in form and colour, are almost absent. This work may be instructively compared with the corresponding passages in Holman Hunt or Turner, where far greater effect of multitudinous detail is given without one stroke of microscopic minuteness. And I would again remind the reader, that the difference between the 'great style' and all other styles lies altogether in the presence of this high imaginative *truth*, and nowise in anything which can be expressed under cover of 'generalization,' 'ideality,' or the other catchwords for parrots. Dyce's *Jacob and Rachel* (597), though the virtue of oil-colour is not in it, shows truly admirable drawing, and a true and tender sentiment with which all the beauty of the narrative has rarely inspired the Scriptural artists of any age.

O'Neil's *Eastward Ho* (607), with his *Volunteer* (748), in the fourth room, are creditable specimens of good steady work in that more serious style of Incident which has lately become common. The sentiment of each would try severely the most able artist; indeed such a man would probably find it grow under his hands too powerful for Art and her high pleasure, and would concentrate himself on one group, or, like Hogarth, mix humour and human absurdity with his seriousness. In this rank it is no disrespect not to place O'Neil; but it is true merit to have so well kept clear of vulgarity, or melodramatic display, or over-ingenuity. And what labour must have been given to work out pictures thus arranged!

Wolf's *Ptarmigan* (585) are as full of intense truth to the wild creatures as **J. Ward's** *Cattle*, but not carried out with such force. Yet the delicate grays are well managed, and the scattered stones drawn with admirable care. The picture will be probably thought monotonous; but this identity in colour between the birds and the granite is one of the subtle harmonies of Nature for the preservation of species, dwelt on lately in Darwin's well-known book.

We may now pass from the upper line with a word of praise to **Anthony's** well-sketched and originally-treated *Beech and Fern* (604), and **Holland's** bright *Rotterdam* (588), and a word of regret that **Sant** should waste on waxwork and affectation, the picturesque eye for colour and for childhood shown in the *Red Riding Hood* (592) and *Whisper* (617).

Faed's incidents, like Webster's, are mostly taken from cottage life. It is an art of small pleasant surprises that he gives us; a little point of wit, and a little touch of sentiment, perhaps set off, as in the *First Break* (595), by the contrasted indifference of the children to their brother's removal, whilst the father bears the boy's departure with shrewd hopefulness. Even the weather sympathizes in its way, and repeats by clever signs the varied feelings of the family; here a gleam, and there shadow, the rainbow on one hand, and the shower on the other. All this is ingenious, but it seems rather after the manner of a tale for very young children, where the moral comes in at the end of every sentence. We are sure that Faed's abilities would command attention for a simpler style of story. His colouring, like that of other Scottish artists, is haunted by the conventionalities of Wilkie. Faed's work, like Frith's, has a look of dexterous facility; he seizes momentary motion with success, and his backgrounds show a happy eye for natural effect. The humour in his other piece is rather over-accented.

As it would be easy to name the rival Novelists to these artists, so our English love of Southern and Eastern travel is repeated in **Phillip** and Lewis. The essential difference between them might be simply summed up thus, that Lewis paints the life, and Phillip sketches the manners. Phillip's scenes are clearly and well imagined, though one wishes he would rely less for effect on the burliness of priests and the brownness of beggars; the colouring careful and heavy, true neither to Southern light nor shadow: they are Spanish plays performed on an English stage,—and not always in a faithful or spirited translation: Andalusian material, and London manufac-

ture. This painter's skill in narration deserves notice. Except, perhaps, the *Prayer of Faith* (605), with its pretty girl-portraits, each picture tells its own tale, not with refinement or greatness or any depth, it is true, but clearly. The arrangement of his figures, and the suppression of smaller incident, appear the means by which this success has been compassed. But it cannot be concealed that the ability shown here verges already on coarseness, both of style and execution: we trust the artist will remain faithful to his better self, in these first elements of genuine painting.

No one, since the art began, has probably kept a more even and consistent carefulness than **Lewis**. Thought cannot be so distinctively ascribed to his pictures,—rather, perhaps, the thought is, as it were, absorbed and identified with the indescribable perfection and completeness of the work. What he wishes to impress on us is Oriental life in its great general qualities. Thus in the *Cairo* (590), everything expresses the *resignedness* of the Eastern labourer,—the noiseless apathy which masks the untamed wild nature within: whilst in the *Shop* (637) we have the deep settled enjoyment of wealth, possessed or prospective, which has long marked the Eastern merchant. There is not a line or a tint in this strangely-fascinating picture but tells of rich repose and sheltered coolness: compared with the agitation and fret of European life, these Moslem merchants of Lewis appear like the voyagers who had reached the Lotos-land, 'in which it seemed always afternoon:—yet with this calm and stately fatalism, the Oriental stealthiness and craft are subtly united.—What a long result of centuries Lewis has concentrated in these little works,—and all by absolute truthfulness! Here is no incident shown, no moral suggested, no manners set out for illustration,—nothing to strike the careless eye,—only the real character of a whole nation mirrored with all the modesty of Nature:—in every atom of colour, and every least little line and surface, faithful with a majestic fidelity. The subdued clearness of the lattice-work in the window of the *Cairo*, the varied motion and life of the pigeons in the foreground of the *Shop*, as exquisite in form as in iridescent lustre, are of a quality so much beyond the standard, even of most genuine art, that one knows not in what terms to praise them.

To the qualities contained in the art of Lewis, **Holman Hunt** adds a dramatic intensity of thought and a force of expression and of colour which, (to the writer at least), appear to place him amongst

the very small band of high Imaginative Masters who have fully realized their powers. His pictures burn with a kind of inner fire, which extinguishes almost all other men's work: the sun's heat seems within the *Cairo* (581), the pure crystalline day itself in the scene from Shakspeare (728): the hazy celestial silver of the moon, mixed with the stealthy influences of starlight and dawning, and subtle flashings from gem and dewdrop, have been united and harmonized in his *Light of the World* (580) by we know not what mysterious magic. This enumeration of the varieties rendered by Hunt in a single natural feature leads us to another quality of his art. It is without existing rival in the breadth of its range, not less than in the force of its execution. Consider how wide a scope of subject is shown even by the three pictures here exhibited: humour in 581, dramatic passion in 728, awfulness of Divine Love in 580, unquestionably the most serious piece of art in the collection. It is not meant that these works are of equal importance or interest: the sentiment of the *Cairo* Scene (a boy trying to feel out before his marriage-day the features of his betrothed), is too foreign and far-off for general sympathies, and the life and litheness of the lines in the girl will probably offend those who admire the Academic attitudes of Frost's *Una*: the balanced intensity of expression and forceful character in the *Sylvia* will only be understood by those who know Shakspeare by heart, as the truly charming phrase has it:—whilst the endless delicate detail by which Nature works, and which the artist finds essential for the rendering of her mingled breadth and minuteness, will escape the attention of the indolent, and drive the theorist into the refuges of his 'long-tailed words in *ation*.' Why should this surprise us? Were it otherwise, it would not be great Art,—the expression of the most numerous facts, and the revelation of the highest thoughts. And we must bring our own best thoughts with us, if we would wish to enjoy, or hope to fathom it.

FOURTH ROOM. Many works here belong to painters or styles noticed before, or appear to require no special notice. This does not hold of M'Allum's landscapes, which do great credit to the artist's conscientious industry, and deserve hearty praise for their careful rendering of a natural feature far too rarely painted,—the half-cleared glades in our forests, so impressive in their effect, and so valuable from their free exhibition of tree-form and surface undulation. M'Allum has made skilful use of the latter, and his oak and beech have been honestly drawn;—but imaginative impressive-

ness is wanting. Like Dyce's work, this errs from over-finish, as Constable's from over-effect : the breath of life is not in it, the mysteriousness and infinity of Nature are replaced by soulless photographic sharpness : it is the error, if I may risk the phrase, of a false fidelity.—There is less force, but better sense of what makes art, art, in **V. Cole's** *Autumn* (777) : the bramble and fern of the foreground, the copse and sky, are well felt, whilst they have been also carefully studied.

Our modern Landscape, following our taste in poetry and in travelling, has returned with a more serious purpose to the Mountain-world by which Salvator was long since attracted. **M'Culloch's** *Achray* (775) shows care and feeling, though the colour wants lightness and the water limpidity,—it is reflection without surface. **Oakes' Pool** (771) gives us a beautiful foreground, rich in the wildly graceful Flora of the rocks ; even without the brown gleaming of the torrent, we should recognize at once a spot of marshy stagnation. The range of hill is well imagined, and full of fitful light. In the *Aberfraw* (469) the mountain-line is also happy, and this picture, though less impressive than the *Pool*, has escaped that want of union between the foreground and the distance which we feel often in the artist's work. **A. Hunt's** *Llyn Tolwal* (738) is blurred and rather mannered in touch, but the hillside and the great range beyond, breaking through the smoking cloud-wreaths, have the impressiveness which true fidelity never fails to convey. The mountain neck on the right should be noticed for its admirably gradated recession into the veil of shifting mist.

Creswick's *Glen* (759) I have already noticed. Compared with this, **Whaite's** handling in 461 (Room second) looks overminute and fatiguing ; there is a timid air about his work :—but the foreground is rich in most truthful and delicate detail, thoroughly drawn and mastered. The conception appears to me truly poetical,—a glen which one might hope was haunted. **Gilbert's** *Mickleham* (758) may be specially singled out for its careful and genuine cloud-drawing : but it is altogether a little landscape of much modest merit.

Morris' Captive's Return (493) has fine colour and thoughtful tender intention, but it pleases rather in separate passages than as a whole : one might say of such a work, that it is a sketch, rather overlaboured than really completed.

A. Solomon's two *Trial* pictures (720 and 734) may be classed with Elmore's *Tuileries* or Egg's *Tale*—dramatic power and steady

careful painting employed on a subject too painful for Art. It is not that this suspense of agony or revulsion to happiness are in themselves inadmissible; but they far outrun the bounds of the mere Incident Style:—they require the tragic earnestness of Hunt, or must be relieved by Hogarth's deep humour. Lacking these qualities, Solomon's work is only spirited melodrama: as Goodall's *Charles* (726) is simple ornamentalism.

We pass to more serious things with the *Woodman's Child* (742), the *Valentine and Sylvia* (728) and the *Last Day in the Old House* (727). Of Hunt I have already spoken: he has placed on the frame the lines which the picture immediately illustrates, but it may be added that it is the last scene of the play, in a forest near Mantua, where the principal characters have met by one of the happy-making accidents which are reserved for the other and better world of Poetry. We see Julia on the left, who, disguised as a boy to follow her faithless lover Proteus, has just heard with shame his designs against Sylvia, and now witnesses his abasement, as he kneels before the friend whom he has treacherously tried to ruin. Sylvia meanwhile learns the true story of Valentine's exile from the court; they are both ready to forgive with happiness at meeting:—in a few moments her father, the Duke, will be here,

Come, let us go; we will conclude all jars
With triumphs, mirth, and rare solemnity.

Hughes, though here again rather low and iron-gray in tone, shows the same charm of poetry and execution as in his *Labourer's Return*, the same largeness of design and faithfulness to nature. **Martineau's** truly great work bears some slight impression of the very uncommon labour which the painter has bestowed on it; the effect of the whole is perhaps overdark: although the colour in many parts, notably in the exquisitely managed shawl and dress of the central figure, is of precious quality. But this is an admirable example of what the Incident Style should be: it is one not only interesting to us as a most faithful rendering of our own age, but five hundred years hence will be of equal interest—only it will then be classed amongst Historical Pictures. It is also an excellent specimen of finished detail, thought-out not less than worked-out; the history of the house is written within this one room, yet there is none of that over-accented point which is the bane of merely clever story-telling. I hope this novel in colour will be read with

the care it deserves; it is full of most ingenious quiet detail; we have few in print which give character with such truth and pathos, as this best good fellow in the world who has so gaily betted away house and land at Epsom, or the noble wife who would recall him to business and 'furnished lodgings' (see the county paper upon her desk) from his daredevil and idiotic defiance. This again is great art, and the great manner too—and in a sense from which most of our popular figure-painters are as remote as Fuseli or Haydon. I am glad that the last picture on my list should, in invention equally with execution, be of such good promise for the English school of Oil Colours.

ENGLISH WATER-COLOURS

IN some fashion water-colour painting is the oldest form of the art. Beside its employment for fresco in Egypt and Assyria, Greece and Italy, early papyri and MSS. were thus decorated; although it is probable that not before the period awkwardly named the Middle Ages was the art, 'called Illumination at Paris,' carried to complete elaboration. A few painters in France, Italy, and Belgium (as illumination proper faded before the printing press) tried some form of what we should consider water-colours; but Dürer is the only great artist of the time who felt the use to which they might be turned. No school, however, was founded by his attempts, although thence onwards, notably amongst the Dutch, occasional drawings of considerable finish occur. As an independent art, however, partly distinguished from oils by general choice of subject, but more by the effect which it secures and the comparative facility of the process, Water-colour painting has hardly existed for a hundred years. It is indisputably an English invention, and hitherto has only been practised as a School in England. The love of the natural landscape, with two curious external predisposing causes, are the great general laws which appear to explain why an art apparently so obvious, could not or did not arise before the reign of George the Third. On the modern passion for the picturesque I have already touched: it must be enough here to specify our national genius for mechanical invention and finish, and the vast numerical proportion of the more educated and wealthy classes in England, as the other concurrent influences,—the first giving us superiority and cheapness in the materials, the latter providing not only an infinite number of patrons, but of amateur followers of the new art. Hence my task in this province may be confined to a short view of the progress of our Water-Colour School, and of the most conspicuous specimens of each master. Every one, happily, has some knowledge of the art, and in direct opposition to the case of Sculpture, is ready more or less to test it by the standard of Nature. And the comparatively limited range of Water-colours, (I may add), has in general so confined the artists within one style of

subject and execution, that they can be not unfairly judged by a very few characteristic examples.

Brief as its career has been, our Water-colour School has passed already, since the period of **Sandby's** careful body-colour reproduction of Gaspar Poussin (), through three phases. In the first, the stained drawing, as it was called, consisted of a design in brown or blue-gray wash, strengthened more or less by a pen outline, and touched over in the lighter parts, the sky, or water, or foreground, with a little colour. The colour is rarely of positive tint, and the brown wash itself is kept a moderate tone, as if unwilling to grasp extreme effects of light and shade. This system secured a peculiar and pleasing character of breadth and repose, when the artist brought poetry in his heart to the work, and the nature of the subject allowed it. **Nicholson's** *Waterfalls* (907 and 937), **J. Chalon's** *Shorwell Rocks* (832), **Byrne's** *Twickenham* (836), **Glover's** *Italian Scene* (850), **Edridge's** *Trees* (837), and the *Coursing Scene* (872), by **Dayes** are good examples: the *Windsors* by Sandby and **Havell** take a loftier aim with considerable success; whilst the beautiful *Cottage* of **Stevens** (938), so full of country calm and sweetness, is trembling, as it were, on the brink of colour. But in figure-scenes, or the architectural designs for which the art was at first specially employed, see **Cristall's** *Fisher Boy* (916), **Rowlandson's** *Reviews* (821 and 822), **Edridge's** *Gate and Bridge* (925 and 833), and **Glover's** *Chapel* (833), these qualities, in particular when the pen lines are prominent, are not seen, and hence many of the early water-colour drawings show tamely beside the brilliancy to which we are accustomed. Those, however, that bear the names of **Cozens** (died 1794) and **Girtin** (1775—1802), whom, with Sandby, we may consider the founders of the school, almost always deserve notice. By the first, the art was practised in the most primitive fashion, though with profound feeling. What a 'silent eloquence of Nature' (to quote from Leslie's charming criticism on Cozens), gentleness and greatness, appear in his *Isola Borromea* (801) and two mountain views (827 and 828). He was mostly employed in Italy, and hence his subjects differ from those taken by most of our early men; but the Italian landscape had never been touched before with so sweet a solemnity.

In **Girtin's** later works, washes of positive colour are cautiously added, till the tones of Nature, in her sedate moods, are nearly reached. Magnificent examples may be seen in the British Museum; of the specimens here, the *View in Yorkshire* (888), and the noble

Durham (841), have the 'sobered tints of exquisite truth, and broad chiaroscuro,' which are noticed as his characteristics by Leslie: his more advanced style, with no loss however of these fine qualities, is represented by the *Landscape* (834), the *Wharfe* (814), and the *Old Ouse Bridge* (803). **Rooker's** architecture (823 and 824), has a beautiful quiet tone and a look of firm truthfulness. Much of the same poetical feeling passed into the style of **J. S. Cotman**, a rather later artist, whose tender and imaginative appreciation of Nature places him above many to whom fame has been more partial. His *Dieppe Harbour* (858), seen from the heights of Pollet, exhibits a peculiar sense for the force and dignity of the level lines of landscape, and the colour has much purity. Many who, for the first time, see these early drawings will be apt to turn away from their calm gray or golden tenderness: let the spectator study them with care, concentrating his mind on the scenes represented—these Italian valleys, or northern lakes, or romantic ruins of England—and he will find the poetry of the painters sink in his heart with tranquil persuasion, as he stands before visions of so sweet a serenity.

A few figure-drawings of this school carry us back, curiously and pleasantly, to the Old England of our grandfathers; **Westall's** very pleasing *Girl* (802) with her simple frock and hat,—she might be one of Miss Austen's heroines; **A. Chalon's** pretty mannered things, the *Pet* and the *Girl* (910 and 856); **Clennell's** well-drawn *Sawyer* (908), in which the sky-tint, as sometimes with Prout and Fielding, has gone wrong; and **Hills's** careful and characteristic team in the *Ploughing* (917) of days before steam existed.

But we pass from these, with **Gainsborough's** indescribably charming sketches (809 to 811), to **Blake** and **Stothard**, within certain limits, two of the most inventive and original designers in English art. Neither is here represented fully, but they may be compared in their rival illustrations of the *Pilgrimage to Canterbury* (968 and 848) from the Prologue to Chaucer's *Tales*. Blake's work has more poetical penetration; Stothard's more poetical grace; he reaches greater completeness and balance in the whole, Blake goes to the heart of the matter where he succeeds (the Host, the Prioress), but misses much entirely. The contrast indicated runs through their whole life and genius; Stothard the man of boundless and practised Fancy, Blake of restricted and intense Imagination. Yet it is hardly as art that his strange creations appeal to us; the drawing and execution are rarely successful; they

are hampered by the morbid mind of their visionary author, and limited by his neglect of real form ; it is in the force of the penetrative imagination that their value lies,—in their almost painful power,—in their sublime suggestions of some earlier world of patriarchal days, or the mysteries of spiritual and ecstatic existence. These qualities, however, are seen more in his strange oil-picture, *Christ on the Lap of the Church* (221),—Blake's conception of the favourite design of early art,—than in the little-characteristic scenes from Genesis (965 to 967).

Such was not the region familiar to the gentle-hearted Stothard. Sharing in some degree the deficiencies of Blake as an artist, and hence unsatisfactory in his larger oil-paintings, in his water-colour designs he shows a delicacy of feeling and a grace than which art has no fascination more enduringly attractive. Especially in his youthful works there is an airy charm, a power of seizing evanescent motions and lines of momentary loveliness, in which, with exception also of Reynolds and Gainsborough, English art has been seldom fortunate. But as Blake saw all things through a morbid Imagination, so we must admit that Stothard's world is too much the creation of dominant Fancy—another and a better world, it may be, than this, yet without the depth and impressiveness, as it is without the woe and warfare, of real existence. His qualities are well shown in the *Illustrations to the Spectator* (950 to 957). The *Poet's Dream* (958) is one of the later series which he drew for Samuel Rogers : the brilliant *Pilgrimage* (848) should be compared with the same work in oil-colours.

Meanwhile in Landscape,—which we might call the true vocation of Water-colours as a substantive art,—the charm and ease, as compared with oils, of which the transparent tints are capable, modulated and supported by the under-brilliance of the paper, were daily felt more and more, and our school advanced with rapid steps towards the complete rendering of natural effect in all its richness. **Prout**, in his outline style most resembling the earlier period, seized especially on the picturesque in the works of men, and, with English energy and patience, brought home to us innumerable records of cathedral and castle, market-place and town-hall, from every city of Europe ; and this precisely at the time before the prosperity of the long peace and the restlessness of this century had effaced the relics of ancient days, and the times when architecture retained beauty of form and originality of treatment. How

many must have received their first impulse to travel from Prout's views! How many have felt, when they saw their subjects, that they owed much of their poetry to their painter! The architectural drawings here are treated with a skill quite unrivalled in their manly picturesqueness and profound feeling for character; but although what colour there is, in its way is admirable, as pictures they do not equal the subtle delicacy of the landscape in his magnificent *Indian-man* (912): one of the finest drawings for mastery over line and powerful shore-landscape here exhibited.

The style of **Varley**, **Robson**, and **Barret** is more artificial than Prout's, at least in those elaborately arranged views which have usurped the name 'compositions:' but each was a man of true feeling, and has rendered some effects with singular skill. Our artists have grown bolder and more decisive in certain points; but we find now little of that deeper poetical affection with which Varley has given an English depth and serenity of atmosphere in 943 or Robson touched the distant water beneath the massy height of tree and cathedral with a faint rosy blush in his noble *Ely* (829). The sky of his *Conisborough* (862) has a fine quality of rich repose. Barret shows equal power in dealing with Light,—glowing in the *Waggon* (878), and the *Sunset* (835), or pale with summer's heat in the *Refuge* (867); where the beautiful effect gained by giving on the water-surface the sky which is shut out by the trees should be also studied. His *Walton Bridge* (870) is also excellent for the air and river. **Chambers'** *Sunset at Sea* (892), though coarse and little drawn, has fresh and effective colour: and the views by **Austen** (*Rotterdam*, 876) and **Owen** (*Sea-piece*, 877) deserve notice. **Cook's** recent death, to our loss, has brought his works already amongst those of our earlier school: neither of the *Trebarwith* views is carried out in the complete style, but in genuine tenderness of feeling they are worthy of their position. The *Sea in the Morning* (890), and the sunset glow of the companion picture (891) are beautifully coloured.

Dewint's is a homelier poetry; the sharp fresh air of England, with our landscape of formal fields and precise cottages, were his portion; but, somewhat after the fashion of Stanfield, he has charmed them into poetry by a loving truthfulness. We have many excellent specimens: *Torksey* (882) for grand simplicity, *Putney* (928) for serene calm, the *Corn field* (919) for sweet colour, the *Moorland* (920) for air. For the peculiar qualities of the artist's mind, the

Lincoln (918) appears one of the most characteristic: there is a truly wonderful art in the seemingly unstudied arrangement,—the square sail set below the smoking chimney, and the line of foreground cattle, are instances which will make many spectators feel the force of the old remark, ‘*questo facile, quanto è difficile!*’

Last of these great early Poets (so we may fitly name them), comes **Copley Fielding**;—after Turner, our completest master over space and air, and except by Turner, who like Shakspeare, must be excepted everywhere, unsurpassed in rendering the desolation and bitter dreariness of the sea (*Ship in distress*, 880) the incorporeal colour and spiritual beauty of the distant mountain (*Snowdon*, 1162), or the mysterious veil of delicate mist on vast moorland or distant forest (*Bolton*, 1139). I regret that space does not allow fuller notice of the many fine points which the work of these men everywhere presents, but I wish to name one more before passing to him in whom this admirable school culminated. This is the careful selection of subject: the well-considered choice of scenes on which nature has concentrated her purest and most perfect effect, and stored up her deepest feeling. It is not every casual charm, or glimpse of prettiness, which is worth the serious artist’s study: and the large consideration of the men above named in this element of art has accomplished its object by the lasting and noble pleasure their work gives to them by whom it is studied in the sincere spirit which produced it.

Let us now turn to the great artist who sympathized more deeply than any since the days of Tintoret with Life and Nature as they are in all their vast variety, who saw the shadows and the stains of the world with the whole force of passionate imagination,—who, by the discipline of such thoughts and the studies to which they led him, trained himself finally to paint Space, Air, and Light, sky and rock and water, with a poetry and a perfection never before attained by art. For the leading characteristics of Turner’s genius, readers are referred to the summary of English oil painting: here, a brief indication of his position in our water-colour school, and of the stages of his progress is all that can be attempted. But, with reference to whatever follows, and indeed to the criticism throughout this book, I desire to add, that the judgments which, after much study, I feel justified in holding, for myself, with firmness, are written for others with diffidence and hesitation; although within limits thus brief a dogmatic tone, I fear, is hardly avoidable. Especially wherever dispraise has been given, I hope this sincere confession will be kindly

borne in mind by all readers :—that it has never been given without much pain, I hope there is no need of confessing. And, in the more pleasant province of reverent eulogy and honour, I would wish it remembered,—by those who do not feel the correctness of the terms applied to a Reynolds, a Turner, or a Holman Hunt, and even more by those who do,—that the essential excellence of this or any great master is truly ‘beyond and above expression : it is a truth inherent in every line, and breathing in every hue, too delicate and exquisite to admit of proof :’ and that ‘all truths of the highest order are separated from those of average precision by points of extreme delicacy, which none but the cultivated eye can in the least feel, and to express which, all words are absolutely meaningless or useless.’ In this direction, therefore, what I write must be taken only in the spirit of hint and analogy.

Turner when young worked with Girtin, and shared with him in the first advances of water-colour painting. But he seems to have felt from the beginning that thorough knowledge of drawing and of form was the only safe foundation for the art : and as no man had ever more of that unwearied and humble-minded industry which is the surest sign of genius, he gave much time to pen and pencil sketching from Nature. His earliest works are executed in the gray and brown tints alone, but already show that perception of space and power in arranging masses which were to mark him during sixty years of continuous industry. This style is exemplified by the *Clyde* (1014),—interesting also as the first thought afterwards worked out in the ‘*Liber Studiorum*’ print ; the *Reichenbach* and *Abbey* (1070 and 1027) ; *Chepstow* (1041) and *Canterbury Gate* (992) : whilst in the solemn gorgeousness of the *Easby* (1006) we see the most perfect example which the Exhibition affords of our first Water-Colour manner, just about to pass from unity and breadth of tone to truth in local tint. This should be compared with the analogous drawings in the First room.

‘Gradually and cautiously,’ Mr. Ruskin states, in his excellent summary of Turner’s career, ‘the blues became mingled with delicate green, and then with gold ; the browns in the foreground became first more positive, and then were slightly mingled with other local colours ; while the touch grew more and more refined and expressive, until it lost itself in a method of execution often too delicate for the eye to follow, rendering, with a precision before unexampled, both the texture and the form of every object. This

style may be considered as perfectly formed about the year 1800, and it remained unchanged for twenty years.' Turner appears to have followed it with this constancy because it gave perfect freedom to make Form, Space, and Size the predominant features of his work: although, meanwhile, in his smaller drawings, the play, of colour' begins to show itself. And under this simple system, he set himself to master every variety of landscape form: treating no subject as too high or too low for him: and gaining from this universality of interest the subtle power of expression which enabled him to transfer, we had almost said, Nature in her universality, to paper. 'Throughout this whole period' (represented here by the great Surrey and South Coast series in Sir A. A. Hood's possession), 'Turner appears as a man of sympathy absolutely infinite — a sympathy so all-embracing, that I know nothing but that of Shakspeare comparable with it. Nothing can be so mean as that it will not interest his whole mind, and carry away his whole heart; nothing so great and solemn but that he can raise himself into harmony with it.'

The full proof of this prodigal variety must be sought in the painter's own Gallery at Trafalgar Square, or in his 'Liber.' Of the South Coast specimens, the *Vales of Heathfield* and *Ashburnham* (1032 and 1021) appear the most remarkable, from their extraordinary rendering of surface-undulation and distance; observe how the anatomy of the ground is followed and varied, like the figure by its drapery in the work of a few first-rate sculptors, by the wavy sea of copsewood. The *Pevensey Bay* (1024), with the exquisite *Brook-scene* (994) are marvellous pieces of Turner's work in trees, seen against the sky, or excluding it by its green abysses: compare the absolute drawing of the forms with such work as Lee's and Cattermole's, the illimitable mystery and clear confusion of lines and colours with the false precision of Dyce, or the baby dots and pin-pointing of Birket Foster. The manner in which Turner has conveyed the sense of the Down-country into the park foreground of the *Bay* should be also noticed, with the mighty sweep of the whole composition: the boulders in the *Brook* are in the same grand manner.

This 'grand manner,' however, forsook Turner, great as he was, when he quitted himself and Nature to follow what the idle theorists of the day chose to call such. The *Composition* (1033) though a richer work than the similar subject in the Oil-Colour gallery, and put together with astonishing dexterity from Tivoli and Monte

Pincio material, makes no appeal to us as a whole, and misses the beauty and force of the real scene in its gorgeous and idle accumulation. This picture, with the *Hurstmonceaux* (1020), has suffered in the colour, which like that of the *Chryses* (1044), has now almost advanced to complete realization. But it must be remembered that these divisions of style, although founded on strict truth and convenient in our study of Turner, must not be pressed far: they are deduced from his work, not the result of his theory: and a man of so adventurous and creative a spirit would, no doubt, sometimes outrun his general style, or repeat an earlier manner if the subject seemed to require it.

However these things may be, Milton and Shelley, when they wrote the 'Penseroso' and the 'Alastor,' did not close their youthful manner, or announce their coming splendour, with more sweetness of touch or plenitude of poetry than Turner, when in his *Chryses* he gave a scene from Homer with a glory which even in the art of Athens or the Islands was never dreamt of. His real subject is here the first cause of that Wrath which brought the ten thousand sorrows of the Iliad upon the army besieging Troy:—for the prayer of Chryses the priest, robbed of his daughter by Agamemnon, is heard at once by Apollo the Sun-god, who 'came from the mountain-peaks of Olympus, indignant, going like the Night, and afar from the ships let fly the arrow' which brought nine-days' plague on the camp. With what skill has Turner indicated the points of the story in his storm-threatening summer sunset, and arrow-like flight of torn cloud landwards, in the angry curl and flash of the rising waves, preceded by the screaming petrel,—with how profound a sympathy!—This is truly to illustrate a great poet, . . . but more;—it is to be a great poet oneself.

Having now mastered Form, Colour was pursued with the same resolute industry, the same natural quickness of eye; the subtlety of handling, learned in his long patient pursuit of Form, enabled him to lay his tints with a rapid and delicate decision, of which all who have ever tried one faithful study from Nature will know the enormous difficulty. It was not only that he now *added* colour to his drawings—essentially the painter's quality, when once understood, it can never take a second place—his designs were henceforth primarily *conceived* in colour. Hence a change of subject became necessary. Turner from this time selected often the natural scenes richest in tone—sunrise and sunset, lakes trembling in mid-day

light, or where the moon of summer bathes river-side crags and ruins with hazy silver. And from the same date, finding that the earlier landscape painters, whom he had hitherto frequently followed in their form and arrangement, could teach him nothing in colour—nay, that, on the system of Poussin or Vandevelde, truth and vivacity in colour were impossible—he worked in a manner exclusively his own. This second style may be briefly characterized as showing ‘delicate deliberation of handling, cheerful moods of mind, brilliant colour, defiance of precedent, and effort at ideal composition,’ gradually passing, till within a few years of his death, into ‘swiftness of handling, tenderness and pensiveness of mind, exquisite harmony of colour, and perpetual reference to Nature only.’ I will try to point out the special points of mastery in the most conspicuous examples here exhibited,—premising that all show the essential feature in Turner’s treatment of colour,—ceaseless gradation, united with its corresponding feature in Form,—infinite subtlety of curved line and undulating surface. They illustrate also his method of execution—delicate and decisive, little aided by the mechanical expedients of ‘sponging’ or ‘rubbing,’ but relying mainly on pure colour laid in once for all, with absolute determination of its effect. Like the star described by the poet, ‘Turner’s hand seems to have moved ‘without hurrying and without staying;’ and although some ingenious aids to the art are ascribed to his invention, yet his general practice in water-colours was of that simple and direct kind with which perfect knowledge is always satisfied.

As we closed the first great period of his work with a *Sunset*, we may begin the second with a *Sunrise* (1016), also over the sea. Perhaps the whole collection has nothing of a more absolute and glowing serenity: it is precisely the most attractive and the most difficult moment for art, when the brightness of the day, almost completed, has also taken into itself the transient gold and crimson of the dawning. Yet it will be found that Turner has reached this trying effect with the utmost positive truth of painting, without more than a point or so of pure force in his reds and yellows; all that less power and knowledge would have vainly attempted by blots or splashes; he has gained by exquisiteness of gradation. Other aspects of the sea follow; the half-landlocked tossing and azure greenness of waves beneath a fresh English breeze in the *Plymouths* (1057 and 1074):—contrasted with the spent yet unbroken fury of the tortured Atlantic in the *Land’s End* (1015),—forcing itself on in fountains of shattered

spray over the eternal granite, like the desperate charge of cavalry against some impregnable redoubt. After work so magnificent as this, any one's else seems child's-play: and with what a simplicity, yet what subdued richness of colour, it is carried out!—But it is a peculiarity of this great Magician that he not only distances all other men in execution, but in ceaseless variety of effect. Whilst many artists are satisfied to repeat one scene with fifty slight deviations, and more to remain for life within a small circle of Nature, like her, he gives us always some new thing, and every picture is but one paragraph, as it were, in his vast connected Poem of Creation, richer and more exhaustive than even that Epic on the *Sum of Things* which the old Roman has left us. Thus he now passes on from the ocean in its fury to the azure calm and liquid level of the *Dead Sea* (1003), or gives the gleaming flats of the ebb, retiring into infinite yet transparent darkness in the *Mount* (993), or the long winding coast-line seen from on high, with its rolling surges, in the *Lebanon* (1040). In this little work we should note also the gleams of stormy light on the horizon clouds, throwing down their rain with southern violence—whilst in the *Mount* we have a whole mountain-range in the sky, built up through every line and wreath with absolute truth and decision, and all brought into sublime unity by the vast crossing shadow where the moonlight is interrupted. Again, the *Dead Sea* and the *Horeb* (1047) display like mastery in mountain-drawing; the whole chain of the hills of Moab in the first is given with the subtlest anatomy, and the miles of valley in the *Horeb* are all gathered within the space a child's hand would cover; yet it will almost fatigue the eye that attempts to follow its innumerable gradations of retirement.

From these let us return to English scenes,—amongst which the *Stamford* (1023) and *Malvern* (1030), appear on the whole less satisfactory specimens of Turner: he is always struggling and fighting on and upwards, and here the wish to conquer extreme effects of intense difficulty has led him here into violent oppositions of colour. The *Kilchurn* (1034) and *Dartmouth* (1031) partly seem to me to fail from a different cause,—over-abundance of material; although the *Kilchurn* is full of masterly level and hill-side drawing, and the water-reflections and covering copsewood of the central promontory in the other are of a truth and tenderness which even Turner has rarely equalled. The trees in the *Riveraulx* (1018) and the exquisite vignette to Scott (1017) are in his greatest manner; the *Lancaster*

(1022), perhaps, the most perfect of the specimens for balanced fullness and infinity of detail, as broad as it is delicate. Lastly, the two lovely Castle Scenes (1073 and 248) may be referred to for poetry and picturesqueness in the treatment of the ruin; each giving the glory of sunlight on water, with that marvellous blending of the cool and the warm tones which one might signalize as Turner's most peculiar gift, — were it possible to give any one the crown, where all are so consummate.

The latest style of the artist is here represented by one specimen only, the *Heidelberg* (1045).

I can hardly hope from this alone to prove the peculiar excellence of painting so unlike that of any other man. But those familiar with his work will easily recognize here the Master in his fullest power, aiming less at positive truth of effect than at relative approach to the confused and living multitudinous of Nature in colour not less than form,—giving a myriad suggestions, as it were, for the thousand details of his earlier work, adding further tenderness to tenderness, and deeper truth to truth, blending the whole into a poetry beyond words, and creating the landscape anew with a power, august and plenary as that of Nature.

Can there indeed be so much, and worthy of so high praise, I hear the reader,—fair and unfair,—ask, in these little squares of tender colouring? — What there is, is truly so far more, that all the writer can feel, must be the total inadequacy of his words to do justice to them: 'Turner's art in water-colours,' as Fielding once remarked to him, 'appears to me as different from what I or other men can reach, as water-colour painting itself from oil-painting.' To speak of him is like speaking of Shakspeare; the poet's supremacy within his art is not more supreme than the painter's. And as in Shakspeare what we most feel is what Coleridge felicitously called his 'myriad-mindedness,' so it is with Turner. Each has created, whilst he described, a world of infinite variety; and each has identified himself with his work with a self-forgetfulness and abandonment so absolute, that he seems lost in the circle of his own creations. Like the necromancer of the legend, these men are overmastered by the spirits they have called up, and we can hardly think of them as creatures of individual existence, or try to put into words the charm of the enchanted visions, which an art more magical than magic itself has summoned forth around us.

There is, however, room in art for many degrees of excellence;

these stars differ in glory, but we have still some who may be called so to notice, before we descend to common earth again. The poetry of **David Cox**, within its peculiar range, and whenever he chose to express it, is pure and perfect: his feeling for certain aspects of English landscape has all the strange irresistible force of true passion. When a man views his art in this spirit, it must be left to tell its own story to those who share the emotions which animated it. Such will recognize in the specimens here shown, the intense imagination which penetrates his work; what majesty he saw in the common field or cottage; with what an inner eye of sympathy he watched the wreathings of the stream beneath the gloom of forest greenery, the visionary sadness of wide horizons and dreary heaths, or the last red gleam that ebbed away from the heights of Craig-y-Dinas. In the *Welsh Funeral* (977), *Bolsover* (997), *Beeston* (998), *Fern-gatherers* (1011), *Wye* (1164), and many of the smaller scenes in Frames 975 and 976, these high qualities are especially shown. They belong peculiarly to the artist's later style, in which his often blurred and imperfectly realized execution is a severe lesson to the lovers of the neat and the conventional. Yet this seemingly slight and hasty touch conceals a thoughtfulness and a delicacy in handling which is more like Turner's than any other man's work: the views in 176 are examples:—the sweet gradation of colour and beauty of form in the breaking wave of the *Beaumaris* (1010) seem to me of unsurpassed excellence.

There is a wild feeling, one hardly knows whether more poetical or insane, in **Dadd's** *Encampment* (1137); where, however, the artist is not responsible for the awkwardly placed Moon. The trees in his *Valley* (1105) and in **Linnell's** *Prophet* (1103) are admirably felt. For criticism on the *Schaffhausen* (1380) of **Harding**, full of beautiful detail, the interesting *Wreck, Dogana* (1377) and *Rotterdam* (1091) of **Stanfield** and **Cooke**, and the Spanish views of **Roberts** (1374 to 1376),—with **Mulready's** excellent sketches in the Fourth room,—I must be content to refer readers who care to my earlier notice of these distinguished men. And it will be enough here to add, that **Herbert** in his false and feeble figure-scenes (note the sky in the *Venice* (1160) and the heads in the *Faliero* (1106) for special reprobation), **Cope** in his historical design (1383), **Lewis** in his *Desert* (1114 and 1133), preserve respectively the rank which they hold in oil-painting. **Lewis' Pilgrims** and *Convent* (1100) are less absolutely satisfying in colour, but there is nothing like them here for masterly composition, or for their intense

truth to Roman life, so generally and so wearisomely chosen by artists as a field for costume-painting and superficial picturesqueness. In contrast with these men, **V. Cole** and **Branwhite** appear to reach their greatest success in water-colours: the brave attempt at the full green of the trees, and the drawing of the sky, in the *Clover Field* (1102), are particularly praiseworthy. Cole's middle distance in this picture is also very sweet and firm. His *Beech Avenue* (1101) glows with emerald and golden light and true summer feeling; it may be instructively compared with E. Warren's work, to be presently noticed. The frank colour of **Palmer's** *Ballad* (1116), with its striking general arrangement, are very attractive: it must be regretted that the spirit and the faults of manufacture show themselves a little in his too close adherence to one aspect of Nature. But there is some virtue in Palmer's careful work,—not a trace of which can the writer discover in the freezing smoothness and china-like elaboration of **T. S. Cooper's** animal-scenes (1085 and 1086); where, as in the oil-paintings by the same hand, what slight effect there is depends almost entirely on sacrificing air and sky and landscape to the foreground figures. They should be compared with Linnell's charming scene (1001), as truthful in its delineation of the sheep, as it is poetical in its suggestion of the subject by the 'fairy fleeces' of the wind-swept sky above them. **Dodgson's** *Haddon Hall Terrace* (1098) is prettily fancied and coloured;—like his *Ferry* (1276), it is in a true manner, though incompletely carried out. The architectural views of **L. Haghe** and **Nash**, with their followers, hardly seem to rank as art,—at least if Prout was an artist,—but as something midway between an ornament and an elevation they have much merit, with which the mannered and unreal groups too often interfere. Haghe's *Roman Letter-writer* (1113) appears to me painting of a much higher order; the colour and drawing good, the character truly given.

Gastineau's work (Glenarm; 1084) has something of Harding's delicacy in colour, but is more artificial. His *St. Gothard* (1322) perhaps attempts too much; yet we can hardly dwell on this defect, when such good honest drawing as the sky and central hill with the church display is before us. **G. Fripp** gives two views in the vale of *Nantfrangon* (1058 and 1298), both eminently unaffected and honestly worked out, and very pleasing in their expression of the subdued light within a mountain-glen. That with the snowy summits (in Room third), whitened by the cloud which only reached the valley-meadows in shower, is particularly fine in its luminous breadth and

sweetness. The torrent-drawing in the *Fall* (1297) is less successful : but the *Glen Ogwen* (1365), again, with the tender haze of *Eastbourne Marshes* (989), bring us back to the artist's happiest manner. **W. Turner's** *Quiraing in Skye* (1096) is beautifully true in feeling to the solemn purple flush of the Northern summer, and imaginative in its rendering of the desolate world of mountain-peaks, seen over 'leagues on leagues' of mysterious sea.

These, with others not requiring special notice, are mostly 'good men and true,' doing their work with care and pleasure, and wisely restrained within the bounds set by Nature. I turn with much regret to work of another kind, which, though not less careful and studied, appears to me yet so utterly false in aim and manner, and so influential against real Art, that—that the truth must be spoken about it. The baby dots and spots and pin-pointing of **Birket Foster** have been already alluded to. His landscapes have that idle microscopic elaboration which deceives uninformed spectators into astonishment ; although one wash of colour laid-in with the thought and feeling of Cox or Turner involves labour beside which (as all artists know), square yards of this indolent mechanical multiplication are a very little thing. True likeness to Nature, so broad and unfatigued in her repose, could never be built up by this petty 'stippling,' were it founded on the best knowledge of form and sense of colour ;—but in these works the colour is palpably dead, purply, and morbid, and the trees are imagined as clouds of vague spottiness, through which a few random and unconnected boughs occasionally force their way ; whilst the play of light on the water-surface, so varied and exquisite in reality, are rendered by lines scrawled across the paper, with the delicacy and feeling of a child's first exercise. The artist has shown in his familiar woodcuts a certain sense for gentle grace in landscape ; one must regret that, by these unfortunate works, he has at once forced on our attention his general want of thoroughness in drawing (the clouds in *Holmwood Common*, 1206, are however more satisfactory in this point), and wasted a facility of hand which, if trained, might have given us book-illustrations of real value.—**E. Warren's** style is equally alien from real art ; his tree-stems in the *Shade* and the *Rest* (1108 and 1285) show more idea of design, but are curved and set with grim rigidity against the crude whiteness of his sky, and the shadows violently forced, with all the effect of a bad photograph, to bring out the morbid touches of theatrical sunlight. The foliage repeats the spotty manner of Foster on

a larger scale. The *Dean Forest* (1350) does not seem to me truer in method, but the less-exaggerated pitch of tone allows the artist to show his power in drawing with more effect. Let us hope he will return to the ways of tenderness,—for such only are the ways of truth.—It is pleasant to turn from so much wasted care and study to Harding's beautiful *Park* (1016),—full of air, and flicker, and living leaf, and graceful freedom in lines and handling. This is head-work, and heart-work too, as old Bunyan expresses it: we wish evidence of the latter quality were more frequent in the sketchiness and the elaboration of our present School.

One more artist, however, remains for notice, whose marvellous feeling for colour and originality of execution could not exist, however limited his range of subject, without the companionship of true imagination. If Lewis must on the whole be judged our greatest master of tint in water-colours, this will only be in virtue of the far more arduous character of his aim:—within what he attempts, the supremacy of **William Hunt** is absolute. In both, as we saw with Turner, an admirable eye for colour has led them straight to an admirably simple and decisive method of painting; whilst that sense of the large relations of light and shade which always marks a great, as opposed to a brilliant or a pretty colourist, has kept their work broad in its refinement and magnificent in its minuteness. Here, also, we find that division of labour and of subject which has only been possible to modern art in the Locomotive age. Whilst Lewis has brought the life of Italy and Egypt home, with equal insight and power of rendering, Hunt has glorified our own fruits and flowers for us with a mastery almost unknown to any former painter. Their respective scales of colour are adapted with equal skill to their subjects—treated with pervading tenderness by the one, by the other with suffused glow. It might be said that we see the iridescence of the opal in Lewis, the fire of the carbuncle in Hunt. The *Wood Pigeon* (1063), the *Primroses* (1052), and the *Peacock* (1059) are marvels of art:—but I need not specify pictures which all will examine, though the vast difficulty of producing what looks so simple an imitation of nature may be felt by few.

Hunt's figure-subjects are far less happy; he here even misses occasionally the free unlaboured touch of his authentic manner, and his drawing wants life and completeness. Yet these works take high rank amongst our similar modern water-colours by the quality which we shall here find the very rarest,—unaffectedness. This often gives

admirable life and humour to his ragged country boys, and in the *Three Children* (1064) rises to true and tender feeling.

In painful contrast to such work stands what we must confess, whilst we condemn, the art of **Corbould** and **Burton**; most careful and complete, but false in every touch to the characters represented; often meretricious in its appeal; always in its execution. Take the scenes from the novel (1124 and 1125) or the play (1123), and, if you have admired William Hunt here, or Reynolds and Mulready elsewhere, consider whether the truth of country life and circumstance is in this smoothness, and millinery, and tame grimace of affectation;—whether the passionate simplicity of the great Poet's Margaret be less given by the swelling vanity of Corbould's, or the simpering shyness of Burton's. Art, though her end be noble pleasure, may unhappily pursue coarse emotion; and I hardly see how not to couple this epithet with these works; or others in a similar vein,—as **Tidey's** scene from Moore (1261), and that bad ballet-group which usurps and degrades the name of Tennyson's *Vision* (305). Where these artists venture on Scripture-subjects, as Corbould in (336) and H. Warren in (1283), they are safe,—criticism cannot follow them with the censure due to this degree of rashness: but one must regret bitterly that such painting as the drowsy-faced elaboration of the *Peri* (1293), the firework and transparency sublimities of the *Mab* (1228), the sentimental distortion of the *Mother and Child* (1216), the maudlin moonlight of the *First Letter* (1262)—with a few other works in a similar vein—should be thus conspicuously displayed, not to the edification of the nations.

Burton's *Franconian Widow* (1211), *Ironsides* (1069), and *Bamberg* (1370: Fourth room), may, however, be excepted from the blame only too well justified by such choice of subjects as that exposed above: the last has considerable effect in the theatrically-picturesque manner. The feebly-elaborate compositions near it by **Wehnert** and **Werner** are further warnings that this cannot be the true direction for water-colour Figure-drawing. The designs by **Farmer**, **Gillies**, **Corboux**, **Jenkins**, and others, are very pretty in their way, and often pleasing in their sentiment. Yet in all we cannot but trace the same superfine method, which, as in even the best of our modern china-ware, never fails to hamper the artist's hand, and prevent his giving the touch of nature, either to the texture or the expression.

If the style now noticed fails from overcare, the style of **Catter-**

mole, Tayler, and their followers must (I fear) be held to fall short of the mark from oversight. It seems as if some evil genius overshadowed our water-colour School in figure-subjects: as if those who will not reduce the human face to waxwork, must be generally satisfied to represent it by blots. Or are we, who look on, to blame for encouraging Corbould to spend his ability on elaboration, and Cattermole on sketchiness? Perhaps otherwise we might have received truer art from such practised hands: and,—accepting it as a facile conventionalism,—we must still admire the dash and energy of the *Contest* (1120),—the life and freedom of the *Buckhounds* (1195). Tayler's work has a genuine freshness about it; we feel that he thinks of his picture in 'the open,' though he must blot it down in the study. His work gives the sense, not of reserved strength, but of strength never realized. Probably this may be true of Cattermole also; whose manner is, however, more conventional. The *Cellini* (1127) appears the best worked out of his sketches; but the *Naworth* (1129) and *Biorn* (1151) are good specimens of picturesqueness, never indeed penetrating to the warrior through the mail, yet too genuine to be called only superficial.

A. Fripp carries the same style into common and country life, with sufficient grace and invention to make us regret that he does not work out what he washes-in so happily. Yet on the whole I think he is one of the very few who can be placed near Hunt in understanding the true method and aim of water-colour figure-painting. There is a frank air in his work (see the *Peat-gatherers*, 1232), which we miss in the artificially subdued tones and rather affected grace of **W. Goodall's** *Mirror* (1222):—it reflects real prettiness, but it is not held up to nature in her full sincerity. Under the same head we may class **Absolon**: the *Boulogne* (1079) is pleasingly coloured and less operatic than his Italian scenes. **Mole's** figure-landscapes range with Absolon's. As a foundation for finished work, **Oakley's** colour in the *Hospitality* (1197) is very good; it is laid-in with freshness and simplicity: the sentiment of this little picture is also pleasingly unaffected. **Topham** has attempted more ambitious matter. There is true character in his *Zouaves* (1220), and picturesqueness in his *Peasants* (1188): yet one feels (as noticed in regard to our painters of Italian life), that love of foreign attractiveness has here led many artists into perilous ground, whence few bring back what can be regarded as more than the traveller's hasty superficial impression. Hence, probably, when on native ground, as in the very pretty *Mill-*

stream and *Loiterers* (1381 and 1268) Topham is more successful, in what we might call a kind of artificial naturalism.

Two artists in the figure-style remain, by each of whom we have one drawing of real merit. **Rivière's** *Irish Children* (1224) seems to me an uncommonly happy specimen of grace and humour: it is not complete in all points, and perhaps the contrast between the faces is a little too pointed: yet in a certain modesty of Nature and delicacy of outline it resembles the admirably-felt studies of E. Frère. **Setchell's** *Jessie and Colin* (1264) has much greater evidence of power: we wish the drawing were more thorough, and the light less conventionally managed:—but taken all in all, it is a true illustration of Crabbe's fine story; and this is no slight or common merit. Jessie, wearied of the services required of her by a wealthy patroness, has just returned to a humbler happiness:

Here was a lover fond, a friend sincere,

Here was content and joy, for She was here!

—When we compare a design like this with many of those above-noticed, it inclines one to quote again the motto which the poet has prefixed to his tale; 'For aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing: it is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean.'—Next after Hunt and Lewis, we should be inclined to place **Haag** in figure-drawing. We cannot indeed feel so direct an interest in his foreign subjects as in the English children of Hunt, and Lewis, it must be allowed, brings Eastern life far more closely to us than Haag:—but the spirit and grace of his Arab *Rehearsal* (1423), and *Italian Shepherd Boy* (1357) are excellent, and his colour has unusual depth and sweetness. Haag's execution appears to hold a due course between the over and under finish which our figure-painters find it so difficult to steer between.

Returning to landscape, we see the modern tendency to the use of body or untransparent colour, as if in partial rivalry with the effect of oils, exemplified in some fine works. Whilst it will, I think, be confessed that hitherto the greatest success has been reached by the older method, it would be rash to conclude hence against the new, or limit the freedom of our artists. The issues of the style are meanwhile undecided; it may hold sway for a time, as a fashion, or lead to the establishment of another school of art, like that which of old was practised under the name of *Tempera*, and applied with eminent

success in England to miniatures, in the Seventeenth century. Branwhite's *Autumn* (1279) belongs to this style; with many other body-colour pictures, it rather lacks the translucent air tones to which the earlier practice has accustomed us, and its effect is partly due to coarse touches, but the scene is picturesquely treated, and the huddled natural wild-wood,—so unlike what man plants,—drawn with true feeling. **A. Newton's** *Winter* (1190) gives the Highlands under an aspect never to be forgotten by those who have seen it. This picture seems to leave nothing to be wished for in its mountain forms; the solemn size and sense of weight which he has conveyed into these long desolate lines of hill-top,—so independent for their effect on the common forms of Alpine sublimity, may be specially noted. Newton's other work seems to me less satisfactory: the *Glencoe* (1402) is rather lurid and unpleasing; the *Mentone* (1308), rather mechanical.

Redgrave's honest portraiture of English landscape (*A Surrey Coombe*, 1223), **Bennett's** steadily worked out *Greta and Tees* (1187), and **Davidson's** very charming and tender *Rick Cutting* (1201) take us back to the transparent style of strict water-colours. To the same school belongs the interesting series of Sea-views by **Duncan**:—excellent pieces of genuine work, in which we honour the care and courage of the artist, whilst we feel that subjects of difficulty so intense and material so abundant have not been grasped with entire satisfactoriness. In the *Life-boat* (1347) the touch of iris on the bursting spray is most delicate in tints and truthful in drawing: the *Morning after the Gale* (1263) is perhaps the most happily arranged and best coloured as a whole; but all deserve study. In the *Harvest Moon* (1200) we find the same sterling qualities of work: as a moonlight scene it yields, however, to **E. Goodall's** beautiful *Venice* (1212), which, so far as its position permits of judgment, appears one of the very best pieces in its way exhibited. Goodall's *Assisi* (1192) may also be ranked as true art,—especially when compared with the elaborate and rather prosaic picturesqueness of **Rayner's** *Haddon* (1379), where none of the main tints are exactly true.

In the Fourth room we find examples of the peculiarly modern style, which aims at picturesqueness and effect, and is at once the result and the cause of what has, on the whole, been an excellent feature in England during the last thirty years,—the diffusion of water-colour painting as a part of ordinary education. This has not only given strength and animation to that love of Nature for her own

sake which, more than most pursuits or passions, can calm the soul amidst the 'fretful stir and the fever of the world,'—with pleasant after-remembrances of what we have seen with delight,—but has done much to spread through the country the interest in art and enjoyment of it, which is the one sole form of national encouragement that has any real power to call it forth. Imperial commissions and learned theories, be they never so liberal and logical, are of no vital use here: Art is a thing given only when a nation asks it. Yet while most sincerely grateful for these results, we must acknowledge that this form of art is under a special risk of falling into showy ease and tricks of picturesque effectiveness. It is no disrespect to the bold, clever, and dexterous work of Rowbotham, Richardson, C. Smith, S. and W. Evans, Bennett, M'Kewan and others, to say that it does not reach,—perhaps does not aim at reaching,—that peculiarly poetical spirit which is in the landscapes of our earlier School; that amongst our present masters there are few who seem to share 'the longing for intense tranquillity' of scene, the solemn simple purpose, which so distinguish artists like Robson, Girtin, and Varley. **Naftel's** very careful and interesting landscapes *Loch Lomond*, *Marina* (1329 and 1349), appear especially to want this charm of repose; whilst in the strange *Aurora* and tempestuous *Giant's Causeway* of **Nesfield** (1326 and 1325) ingenuity and hazardous experiment have carried the artist (as it seems to me) too far from the legitimate aim of noble pleasure. Yet there is a power here in unusual effects of light, which, like **Rowbotham's** skill in even gradation of tone over vast spaces, might be available for truer work:—such, for instance, as the sky on the right of his little *North Foreland* (1132). The *Lago Maggiore* (1233) is however pleasing and skilful in the picturesque manner; we have a sense of sunlight and air and vast mountain ranges, if not their veritable image and presence: the effect is, perhaps, if we may risk the phrase, too *panoramic*. The same term might be applied to **Vacher's** meritorious *Morning* (1420) and *Sorrento* (1336): but these works are less mechanical in execution. They show a truly refined feeling for colour and for the expression of vast vaporous haze; the strange visionary character of the Italian landscape late or early in the day is in them.

The works of **C. G. Smith** and **Richardson** fall under the class of brilliant effect above noticed: every ingenious experiment has been tried, and in the *Glencoe* (1421) we have an excellent piece of mountain-drawing in the central mass, with careful passages of sky and cloud

around;—but we do not feel for a moment alone with Nature. **Bennett's** sketches (they are hardly more) are in the older and simpler picturesque style: the *Heaven's Gate* (1324) shows a scene almost worthy of the name: but the cool gray sky contradicts the sunlight on the 'myriad depth of forest,' as the old poet called it, beneath. **Philp's** *Sea-pieces* (1344 and 1422), again, are pleasingly felt and coloured; if we do not find the force of the ocean in them, it should be remembered that in no subject is the step greater between the sketch and the picture.—The clouds in **Whymper's** *Rock* (1265) are painted with skilful perspective and recession; we find here, perhaps, some evidence of that imaginative feeling from which our recent survey has removed us. This precious quality has been rather overlaid by the steady body-colour work of **Jackson's** Cornish views (1333 and 1353): but reappears in his fine *Cumberland Tarn* (1352). Here the lines of cloud which half blend with the mountain lines on the far horizon are well managed, and the subdued glow of grass under twilight excellently expressed in the slope on the right. **Fahey's** *Whitbeck Fell* (1369) is another piece of honest work in genuine English scenery: the sketching of the foreground ferns, the quiet sky, the plain which slowly merges in the sea-level, appear to me especially commendable.

The beautifully delicate colour, and picturesque management of **Roberts' Irwin** (1374) takes us back to the old pure style of water-colours. But his work, with that by artists represented elsewhere, has already received notice:—**Landseer's** magnificently powerful Highland sketches require none.

SCULPTURE

WHY is it that Sculpture, generally confessed the noblest of the Fine Arts, has no real hold on the thousands who are interested by Painting? Why will these pages be less looked at than the rest of the book?—The answer is not difficult, but so much unpleasant matter must come out in making it, that the writer enters on his task with the most real reluctance. Sculpture was first misdirected, then degraded, until the art fell to its present forlorn state, divided, for the most part, between mythology, sentimentalism, smoothness, and slovenliness. What it might be, even what it has been, are questions rarely asked. There seems no standard and no aim about it, in the minds of artists or spectators; no one compares a statue with nature, or asks if her fine lines and surfaces have been slurred or rendered; the sculptor works,—not like the painter, for the sympathy and interest of thousands,—but for the personal fancy of a patron, or the conventional orders of a Committee; turning out an Angel or a Cupid, with equal facility, and ready with a monument which might be the study of a life at a moment's notice. If Sculpture appeals at all to popular sympathies, they are the sympathies of ignorance for mechanical trick or mechanical grandeur, for sensual polish or spasmodic distortion, for 'picturesque' sculpture, or the facetious, or 'sweetly pretty' style,—everything, in short, which the Art should shun,—not for deep or tender feeling, truth to nature, freshness of invention, refinement in handling, loftiness in aim,—for those qualities, in a word, without which the block in the mountain side is far more living than the statue. That so few look for such work, or will take the pains to understand it, is another grievous obstacle. And the writer hence wishes it to be remembered, in regard to some remarks which he will have to make, how strongly Sculpture has been depressed by these powerful causes from without;—dulling the invention and staying the hand of naturally-gifted men, and filling the ranks with many who cannot rise beyond the manufacturer, or gain a success ruinous to their Art by greedy haste or charlatan cleverness.

It is hoped that the matter can be made clear by a very brief sketch; and simple justice to the artists requires that I should notice under what general influences the art has been thus lowered. It cannot be that modern life has no place or desire for Sculpture. The races into whose religion it enters are far more populous and extended than during the Roman empire or the middle ages: even amongst those who do not thus employ it, Sculpture is largely required for architecture and for portrait. There is no proof that true genius for the art (always very rare) has been lost from the inheritance of European nations. We must look elsewhere for an explanation. The first and widest cause of decay seems to lie in the very nature of the work. The materials for the modelling-tool and the chisel, by their essential quality requiring and befitting only largeness, grandeur, delicacy in expression, and vital handling of detail—Simple Earnestness, to put it in brief,—at once greatly restrict the sphere of the sculptor in subject and in execution, and expose his art to suffer first and with most injury any decline in national taste. Whilst this, as in what may be properly called the mediæval days of Greece and of Christendom, retains a healthy simplicity and directness in its aim, Sculpture flourishes. But, by a circle often repeated, men's minds turn gradually from loftier qualities to the elaborate, the ingenious, and the sentimental—to meretricious pettiness and analytic detail. They will no longer be satisfied with simple earnestness in higher Sculpture, or pure severity of ornament in its more architectural branches. This altered taste cuts away together the proper subjects from the art, and the legitimate modes of handling them. Poetry and Painting—arts more truly plastic than that which bears the name—accommodate themselves to the change, and, taking the better elements in the altered taste, or turning to new fields altogether, produce admirable works:—Giotto and Leonardo are followed by Tintoret and Rubens; Wordsworth and Shelley replace Shakspeare and his successors: or perhaps some solitary genius lets the present take its way, and is content to influence the years to come by 'Paradise Lost.' But Sculpture has not this facility of transformation. For a time she may rival painting in finish and ornament, and fill the churches of Venice or of Toledo with work which seems to pass the limits of human patience and ingenuity; appeal to ignorant interest by the mechanical effects of deceptive imitation or spasmodic vigour; to vulgar wealth by size or costliness of material; to personal patronage, in her last struggles,

by flattery or self-assertion ;—but these efforts gradually fail, and the art, losing all sight of its purpose, whilst the spectators lose all idea of judging it by the test of truth and nature, sinks into slovenliness and nonentity.

This fashion of decay was exhibited fully under the falling empires of Rome and Spain. But in Italy and France another and not less fatal cause was concurrently awakened,—the direct result of that intellectual movement of the Sixteenth century, to which we owe so much of the deepest moment to modern life. Sculpture in those countries—and in England, when the art was here revived—did not sink into fancifulness and ornamentalism only : subjects suitable to the essential conditions of marble were retained—were, indeed, held, as before, the true field of the art. Simplicity, tenderness, grandeur, thought, were still required of the sculptor, at least in the higher branches of his work ; but, by a perversity rare even in the annals of human perverseness, at the moment when these qualities were required, they were rendered absolutely unattainable by the subjects prescribed to him. Like the tyrant of the great Roman epic, the false taste of that age chained a living art to a dead mythology, and the sculptors of Christendom were compelled to reproduce the pantheon of Paganism. To state this is surely sufficient: such an attempt at the very best could end only as it has ended—in three centuries of abortive endeavour. But the attempt itself, owing to the imperfect scholarship and corrupt ideals of the Renaissance period in France and Italy, was made under the least favourable conditions ; for the mythology and the legends which pedantry and fashion gave as the sole legitimate subjects for sculpture, were—not the once vital and always poetical belief of Athens, Ionia, or Achaia, the personified Powers of nature and of the soul,—but those misunderstood and perverted repetitions with which a race, below the Greek as much in morality as in intellect, had amused itself under imperial despotism. It was the Roman Renaissance, the tales of Ovid, the legends of Apuleius, the travestied heroes of Livy or of Lucan, which supplied an existence, false and shallow as its sources, to modern sculpture : crushing many a noble artist by the dead weight of themes which he could not vivify, paralyzing his hand by compelling him to study, not from nature, but from the museum ; and, at the same time, ruining the taste of whole nations, by placing before them works which they could neither understand, nor enjoy, nor compare with any real standard. People at large often accept this so-called Clas-

sical and Allegorical Art on trust; dimly conscious that what are paraded as masterpieces cannot be of that excellence which once made a statue the ransom of a city, they confess that sculpture to them is only weariness, but are ashamed not to echo the praises, which seem to come from some upper world of taste and knowledge beyond their cognizance. There is little reason for this shame. The proofs cannot be given here, but the writer has no hesitation in saying that the classical learning on which this galvanized mythology rests is, for the most part, of the old uncritical kind, and that any true scholar must look with scornful disgust on the school-exercises in marble, which in France, Italy, and England have sensualized into idiocy the *Love unconquered* and *Immortal Aphrodité* of Sappho and Sophocles. A shallow pedantry has been the foundation for a perverted art. This modern work stands in the same relation to Homer's Zeus and Pallas, as a boy's modern Latin verse to Virgil's:—

O how frail
To that large utterance of the early Gods!

—In fancy one might see the great Venus of the Louvre, or the Dionysus* of the Parthenon, tossing their proud heads in contempt for the puny new Pantheon,—or asking under what possible pretext these impostors have usurped their names in the Nineteenth century of Christendom.

Whilst protesting against this folly, I would not deny that here and there a sculptor may be born, who, by intense imagination and feeling, will, as it were, throw his life back two thousand years, and to whose eyes, as to those of Goethe or Keats, 'the spiritual power of the Gods may appear, and the serenity of their dwelling-place; '—only that to do this with any success the artist must not only 'be a Greek himself,' as Shelley said of the young Adonais, but his audience must be Greeks also. Is not the bare statement of this, again, enough? Of those who will visit this Exhibition, could **Flaxman**, or **Banks**, expect that one in a thousand will be a scholar sufficiently trained to sympathize with the *Consolations of Thetis*, or comprehend the *Fury of Athamas*? Perhaps in all modern art there is not a more lovely design than the *Mercury and Pandora*: no angel by Michael Angelo,—no bird in the heavens, to take the better standard,

* Identified with the statue wrongly named *Theseus* by the fine research of Mr. Watkiss Lloyd.

could move with more absolute grace, or give the effect of more entire self-supportiveness. Over his *Shield of Achilles*, again, Flaxman has poured an affluence of invention worthy of Homer :—**Watson** has treated his *Sarpedon* bas-relief in a very fine style ;—but are we to come with Lexicon and Lemprière to translate these wonders of poetical modelling into English ?

One must own, that to a man who has truly studied and felt the literature of the glorious Hellas, there will be at times an impulse, when stirred ‘through all his nature’ by the living lines of Homer or Sophocles, or some immortal fragment of lyric song,—stately as the Memnon of Thebes, and delicate as the Fates of Phidias,—to wish to clothe in form what has so deeply moved his fancy. But grant this be done with the poetry of Flaxman, or the scholarship of Thorvaldsen, must not a further thought strike him, and reduce the *Olympus Regained* of mythological art to a splendid absurdity ? The more he has penetrated the mind of the Greeks, the more will he feel the vast difference that lies between studying an ancient creed, and holding it. The very best modern-antique bears its sentence in the simple fact, that it is modern-antique. That art which neither springs from real belief nor appeals to real belief, it matters little whose work it be, must be a learned mockery ;—I do not see how the word can be avoided, a Nonsense Sculpture. Or look at it in another way ; can we imagine Phidias carving the gods of Egypt or Syria ? Should Shakspeare have written Hamlet in Latin ?

Serious as the subject claims to be, I confess it is difficult to think of Nollekens’ *Venus*, Canova’s *Venus*, Gibson’s *Venus*, everybody’s *Venus*, with due decorum,—one fancies one healthy modern laugh would clear the air of these idle images,—one agrees with the honest old woman in the play who ‘preferred a roast duck to all the birds in the Heathen Mythology.’

But very far too much would be granted if we should expect to find intensely poetical power and insight frequent in this class of subject. Even Flaxman, gifted thus beyond any modern Sculptor, has left many more models in a genuine style than in the false antique ; see his charming Christian bas-reliefs, the admirably imaginative and powerful group of the Struggle between Good and Evil in particular. But when minor men touch the Gods of Greece, the result justifies that utter weariness which the unsophisticated spectator inevitably feels, as he yawns before the white spectres of the Gallery. If their classical studies had led them so far, there is a proverb that should

have warned many a sculptor from his Venus and his Mercury. 'It is not every one who can bend the bow of Odysseus'—and truth compels the unpleasant question, which of the suitors for success in the Antique has bent it. Has **Canova**, with his waxen work and frivolous sentiment,—his Parisian airs, and ballet-girl Graces? Has **Gibson**, his too-faithful follower, in these fair forms, in which ninety-nine of every hundred spectators will only find—and in the writer's judgment, must find only, masterpieces of—lifeless labour and careful coldness? What a waste of patient toil and elaborate study is here! What a regret to see the distinguished artist misled by too much learning into the attempt to stain into life the faces to which even his refined taste and practised hands could give no vitality! Or think of **Thorvaldsen**, his whole life one long indefatigable anachronism, sacrificed with such zeal to studying and designing in the dead language of Greek and Roman mythology, that he could never take time to master his noble art, but was dependent on others' hands for the execution of his own figures. Nor has the canker of this imitative manner been limited to the suggestion of unreal and impossible subjects. What from living in a cloud-land of learned theories, and imitating the second-rate Roman sculpture which crowds the Vatican, these celebrated artists (as in their draperies) seem to have lost the keen sense of common truth when they touch the borders of actual life. Even their portrait-statues—the *Consalvi* here, with **Thorvaldsen's** *Byron* and **Gibson's** *Peel* elsewhere—display more of the ghosts and echoes of a Roman style, than the power and real presence of the living originals.—Think once again of all this lost ability,—remember that to anyone who has really felt what Athens was in her living glory, one fragment from Phidias would out-value waggon-loads of the sham-antique,—and then measure the depth of that memorable debt of three centuries, which Sculpture owes to the pride of schoolboy learning, and the pretentiousness of idle patronage.

After so frank a confession—not of Faith—the writer may hold himself excused from detailed criticism on the numerous heathen or quasi-heathen population of the Gallery. When Art has (in his judgment at least) a radically false direction, there is little use in pointing out the care, or censuring the commonplace, which different men have thrown into their ungracious task. Those, however, who find an interest here, should not pass over the conscientious elaboration and beautiful lines of **Wyatt's** groups and **Foley's** *Ino*; the

exquisite grace of **Behnes' Cupid**, the severity of **Kessels**, the freedom of **Lequesne**: — beside the works by the earlier artists in this style already mentioned.

The taste for modern Paganism has indeed for some time been diminishing; but Sculpture lies yet under the spell cast over it by three centuries of falsehood. Of all arts the least merely ornamental by its own nature, it remains in great measure what the pride of the Renaissance age made it,—the favourite child of private display. Phidias worked with the 'eye of Greece' to judge him; the mediæval sculptors lavished their fine finish and tender thought on the church front or the town-hall;—but Canova could only be appreciated within the palace, and studied in the saloon. Even when employed on public monuments, the same evil genius has palsied Sculpture; it neither allies itself to the architecture of which it should naturally form a part, nor seems able to throw off the dead weight of Allegory which it inherited from the classical mania. All this has been so often said, that I am half ashamed to repeat it; but it has remained hitherto little more than a barren confession. Efforts have not been wanting to raise the art; now it is to be revived by national commissions, now by choice of native subjects; or from the over-ideal men fly to the over-natural, or try to reproduce in marble the effects of the painter. But Sculpture still remains the forlorn hope of modern art. It has never again taken the position which Painting holds; it makes no appeal to the popular taste. In lieu of speaking to men's hearts, it has sunk to be the job of competition, the toy of the patron, or the wonder of the parish-clerk: the statue which in old days would have kindled the faith or patriotism of a city, now decorates the boudoir, or disfigures the cathedral. Meanwhile, no longer tested by Truth and Nature, even the technical qualities of the art begin to fail; character is not aimed at in the features, or reality in the dress; blunt cutting (as in England), or smart cutting (as in France), or hard cutting (as in Italy), take the place of tenderness and finish: whilst the empty extravagance of work such as **Marochetti's**, or the dead dullness of such as **Noble's** (to take two sadly-familiar instances out of many), is defended by all those idle ingenious theories on the Picturesque style, the Idealized style, and the like, which are even more rife in Sculpture than any other art.

I appeal with confidence to the majority of my readers whether all this be not so. Can any of them honestly say that he has received from modern Sculpture that unforced, untheoretical, spontaneous

pleasure which the art of Landseer or Mulready or Hook has given him? When he wishes for a memorial of wife or father does he turn naturally to the bust, or to the picture? Does he not confess, by languid looks of conventional attention, that these cold white sepulchres of what should be living art are a weariness and a perplexity? It cannot be otherwise; for the decline of Sculpture has necessarily uneducated the public taste. No longer trained by models of excellence, what Sculpture can do in her glory is soon forgotten, with hardly less completeness than if she were numbered amongst the arts confessedly lost from the fields of human achievement. Neither energy in the figure nor meaning in the group, neither vitality in the surface nor truth in the drapery, are longer looked for or missed: the dulled perception, and uneducated apathetic eye, would hardly recognize them if present. The true artist, fallen on alien days, labours on unfelt and unregarded; for his works are judged or neglected by those who refer neither to nature nor to previous achieved success as standards. His example is thus lost, and the art pursues its forlorn career, fed by idle praise, or frozen by general incredulity. It falls into manufacturing hands: the so-called sculptor follows the fashion by which his labour and his gains are so much facilitated; and soon a barbarous slovenliness, varied from time to time by some new phase of false elaboration, or meretricious prettiness, sets in, whilst the quack or the tradesman waste the bronze or murder the marble with results which, in the interest of Truth and Sculpture, I shall presently have the pain of specifying.

Yet this Exhibition shows that there is no lack of endeavour at least to try new ways, or to work out the old with skill and patience; and—an inevitable result from the condition of things—good and bad are jumbled together with embarrassing profusion. No art can less endure mediocrity than this: yet no art has so large a proportion of it. Beside the various attempts in the portrait-style (reserved for the end of this section), we find an honourable ambition to treat Religious subjects, to embody in marble the idea of some familiar hero of romance or poetry, or to personify some elementary passion or idea. With these, which (it will probably be allowed) are legitimate objects for the art, we find others which appear to me dangerous or mistaken, as illustrations of literature, where the difficulty not to fall below the subject is even greater than in Painting; or what has been called the picturesque style, in which the conditions imposed by the material are everywhere violated, and the artist has

recourse to idle ornament, or spasmodic tricks, in hope to win a showy effect, by means which are to real Sculpture what the transparencies of an illumination are to Titian. And with it (to pass by the veiled sensuality of works which need not be named, or the coarseness of such common-place jocosity as the *Crying Child* of the last English Exhibition, and the *Blind Bear* of this) may be classed the sculpture of mere deceptive and most easy trick; the veiled face, or the bough and bird's nest, so literal that, as the phrase is, one could 'take them up,'—we wish some one would!—Sentimentalism, lastly, supplies innumerable subjects,—passing from art in which there is real feeling into mere pursuit of prettiness, Girls with the dove, Children with the dog, Nymphs at the bath, and so on,—ending at last in feeble imitations of the Book of Beauty in stone, or the mere idle repetitions of a model, dignified with a poetical name to supply a reason for carving it.

It is most disheartening to give this long catalogue of endeavour, and yet to feel how little thorough good work has come of it: still more disheartening, to feel that much of the fallen state of Sculpture is due to these great general causes, and that many whose labour cannot be unreservedly praised would, under better influences and if working for intelligent spectators, have shown their ability or care in more truly valuable and vital results. These valid excuses should be constantly kept in mind: yet who, without straining himself to admire what bears the name of Ideal Art, will find much serious satisfaction in imaginative sculpture? Look at these endless inexpressive regular faces, Baily's *Nymph*, Macdowell's *Psyche*, Marshall's *Sabrina*, Westmacott's *Peri*,—with their hundred foreign sisters, and ask if the force and vast variety of nature be truly in them. They show often most creditable care and study; each is beautiful in itself; they seem creatures of another and a fairer world than this; but they come and they depart like shadows from our memory. Nor, in the high essential sense, are our imaginative statues embodiments of the character represented. Take **Baily's** celebrated *Eve*, and when admiring its grace and skillful lines, ask whether in its beauty there is anything of the Mother of all Living, as she appeared to the inspired visions of Milton? Might we not almost as well name it a *Girl Bathing*, with Wyatt's equally charming work? **Marshall's** *Ophelia*, again, though not carried out with the same completeness of modelling and execution, is beautiful,—the bosom especially so: yet if

judged with the strictness which is due to imaginative art, can we honestly say that it embodies exclusively the one Ophelia we all know? These are favourable specimens, by men who have proved themselves genuine artists; and visitors will find a few more to which the same general remarks more or less apply; but move to a lower grade, and we can only regret the time and labour wasted on the clumsy classicality of *Comus*, and *Hermione*, the feeble flatness and sprain-distorted fingers of *Oenone*, the idle Book-of-Beautyism of *Sabrina*, the dew-lap neck of the *Paolo*, or the unshapely form and empty simper into which a coarse chisel has here metamorphosed the sweetness and the laughter of the delightful Poet's mistress.

—Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo!

But it was hardly thus (one should think) that Horace pictured her.—And there are lower depths yet:—but I reserve them for more serious consideration.

I need not say that these remarks are made with much reluctance, and with the constant sense of those general unhappy influences which paralyze Sculpture with the dead weight of three centuries:—preventing our skillful men from doing justice to themselves, and encouraging those who are not skilful to attempt what only genius and knowledge and labour could accomplish. I trust I need not further say, that the writer wishes the subject were in abler hands, and that he can only urge as his justification much attention to Sculpture, and a hearty desire to promote, so far as he can, the interests of the noble art and of her faithful votaries. But, in the present state of things, there is no hope for improvement without downright plain-speaking, and I shall therefore not apologize further for a criticism which can be tested at once by every reader . . . whether for assent or condemnation, I only hope he will so test it . . . Meanwhile,—turning with pleasure from work which, in a healthy time of Sculpture, would never have received the name,—one general source of false direction in this sphere, in justice to the true artists, should be mentioned, which I think likely to be found correct. Patrons, under whom Sculpture in its present state is unavoidably bound, have no doubt often been responsible for requiring subjects of this quality. Yet there seems a too-frequent forgetfulness that the power which, wisely directed, might lead to genuine success, may be insufficient for greater things. When a boy has a turn for verses, he generally begins an Epic Poem: but he does so, because he is a boy. A few

years teach him that Milton or Dante are not born in every street, and he is well satisfied if he can live to posterity in a ballad, or be famous in a song. However little the truth may be practically recognized, it is not otherwise with Imaginative Sculpture.

Moving gradually towards Portrait-sculpture, we may now take works which, although inventions, aim generally at less arduous subjects than mythology or dramatic character. Here we inevitably find the art exposed to all the risks which Poetry brings with it, when not handled by first-rate genius. The half-poetical and only pretty have so great an attraction to many, and the taste for these qualities in art and literature does so much harm by dulling our minds to the real thing, that I must here point out how greatly Sculpture has suffered by sentimentalism. The sacred bas-relief by **Davis**, the *Maidenhood* of **Hancock**,—the *Mignon* of **Cauer**,—works not without charm and carefulness,—are examples; they are respectively like prints from Overbeck and Scheffer in marble. This imitation by one art of the manner of another will always lead astray; but one does not see why, if freed from this, the sculptors named should not do themselves better justice. There are pleasing points about many statues in this ornamental manner; as **Fontana's** *Venus*, and **Fuller's** *Rhodope*: indeed, it requires something to atone for his green *Godiva* in the Nave:—and, so far as I am at present able to judge, much of the foreign sculpture exhibited falls under this class, the Italian especially. Their work by its sharpness and dexterity bears witness to the long traditional practice of Sculpture in the South, but it appears too uniformly and coldly monotonous; it is clean, hard, and smooth—qualities which may suffice for ornamental work, but cannot express the varied play of natural surface. **Bottinelli**, **Cardwell**, and **Gatley**, are careful artists in this manner: the gracefully constructed forms they give are not so much the forms of real life, as the improved ideal of the later antique; their work wants force and freshness:—the critic must, however, decline the ungallant task of specifying the systematic deviations from Nature in such figures as *Diana about to bathe*, or *Eve* studying her well-polished limbs in actual looking-glass. **Spence** has a rather higher aim, but lacks force to work out his conception: his *Jeanie Deans* shows a meritorious attempt at truthfulness, but hardly realizes more than a compromise between the pictorial and the pseudo-classical manners. **Power** carries this conventional modelling and execution to a point perilously near wax-work: the rough cutting of the old Lombard

sculptors is art of a better quality than the false and heartless finish of his *Proserpine* and *California*.

The wide difference between the style here criticized and vital work will, I believe, be felt at once by comparing these figures with **Behnes'** little *Cupid*: one of the most precious pieces of carving in the Exhibition. Contrast the conventional hair of Cardwell's *Diana*, for instance, with the delicately-felt curls of the child; the tone and variety of surface in the flesh with the smooth monotony and textureless undulations of the truly meretricious *Rhodope*: the fine firm limbs with the coarser forms so commonly given from imitation of the type introduced by Raphael.—I think the spectator will also learn from such an examination that taste in judging Sculpture, as in Painting also, is only the simple thing I have here throughout contended for,—reference to Nature:—and will soon learn to value as it deserves the hazy cloud-land of 'generalization' under which indolence or want of eye are apt to shelter their inefficiency.—The panther in **Geiss'** tame animal-group in the Nave exhibits another form of the same mistaken principle.

Gatley's immense relief—showing considerable spirit and infinite pains of a rather mechanical kind—belongs to so strange a mode of art that one can only judge it by reference to artificial standards. It is a cross between the ancient Greek style of the Aeginetan marbles, and the Assyrian slabs, with intervening remembrances of Gibson's horses; whilst the treatment hesitates between relief in stone and in bronze,—having neither the sharpness of the metal, nor the tenderness of the marble. Here and there a figure or a limb is touched with some life, and the attempt to conceive the scene as it may have really looked is very creditable: but we must regret that so much patient labour has been thrown away, in any high sense, by lifeless monotony of surface and our old unfortunate enemy, 'idealized' or 'conventionalized' execution.

Works such as these may be accepted with pleasure, when the artist shows knowledge of his art, and skill in his execution. To these points I must now give a few words,—premising that first-rate excellence in execution is probably not more often found in Sculpture, without the presence of excellence in thought and invention, than in the other Fine Arts,—and that the great aim and difficulty of Sculpture, when the figure has been mastered, is to arrange the lines with grace and dignity; to express the difference of firm muscle and yielding flesh by truthful rendering of the surface; and to manage

the drapery so that it shall express the forms, without losing the natural air and folds of the material. I think it will be felt that English Sculpture is here, as a whole, inferior to Continental. There is indeed little in marble which equals the truth and delicacy of such work as Woolner's in the *Arthur and Constance*, whether in the ceaseless variety of tension and softness in the flesh, or the accuracy with which the linen dresses fulfil the conditions just stated,—and this all pure work with the chisel, not with the sand and the stick;—but on the whole German Sculpture must be acknowledged beyond ours in conscientious care, Italian in dexterous handling, French in far greater mastery of form. An almost universal untruth in the drapery infects this art; those utterly idle theories on 'generalization of costume' and the like, already mentioned to weariness, combined with constant reference to the third-rate antique, have led almost every one to rest content with meaningless dresses and impossible lines. What happily ignorant person who looks at modern Sculpture, but is at a loss to understand these Christians in Roman dress, or dress of no earthly fashion,—these coarse huddlings of drapery, or plaited clinging folds? Here the art seems almost hopelessly entangled in conventional unreality, except where we find the worse errors of the Picturesque School, with their elaborate imitations of lace-work and embroidery, or the sham chain-armour of the *Coeur de Lion*.

On this point, Europe must wait till the better day comes, and men begin at last to look to truth, and perceive that Phidias was great through simply following her. But it is to be feared that our foreign visitors will find a general vagueness of treatment in the English work; a feebleness of discrimination between the firm and the yielding,—a want of tone, so to speak, in the surface. There can be no doubt but that in a truly living and popularly-enjoyed Sculpture, many of our sculptors would reach a more thorough execution;—they would not be satisfied to work below themselves. Meantime, the low standard prevalent where Nature is so little referred to has opened a way to an evil hardly less harmful to the art;—the admission of work by those whose ignorance or slovenliness should exclude them from the honourable name, Artist. If it has been a most unpleasant task to the writer to notice what he thinks misdirected aim or feeble ambition in conscientious Sculptors, it is (he must own) more unpleasant still to acknowledge the counterfeit wares which,—through causes, sometimes, which he forbears to specify,—have found their way into a temporary acceptance. I

would willingly consign all names to merited silence, if the increasing quantity of bad work were not an eyesore in our galleries, and a stumblingblock in the way of honest art. Except for reasons so weighty for the cause of Sculpture, and the duty to be honest, this criticism should have been here omitted: but

Truth is truth,
Even to the end of utterance.

Let us take a few specimens from this ungracious series, and have done with it.—When subjects more or less imaginative fall into feebler hands than those we have been considering, we find a class of work which deserves specific condemnation from the influence it must have in prolonging the public distaste for Sculpture. No one can see Poetry degraded without injury to his taste, and annoyance to his feelings. We might pass by the total emptiness of **Brodie's** *Highland Mary* and *Dante*, **Durham's** *Child and Dog*, **Gibson's** *Nymph*, **Lawler's** *Titania* and *Allegra*, **Thrupp's** toppling and proportionless *Hamadryads* and *Nymph*; but such poetical counterfeits as *Munro's Child's Play* and *Shell*, *Bell's Dorothea*, and *Theed's Bard* must, with regret, be exempted from silence by their positive and prominent failure. The *Bard* at once proclaims its origin: it is simply a bad copy of the familiar frontispiece to the poem,—itself imitated from Michael Angelo. Yet even the print, exaggerated as it is, does not equal the foolish flutter of **Theed's** drapery;—common-place as it is, it does not suggest the absurdity of a wind which blows North and South at once, and takes the hair and robe in opposite directions. This is truly the tale ‘full of sound and fury, and signifying nothing,’—at least nothing honourable to the taste or feeling of its author.

Contrast with this another example of that too-rare subject in modern Sculpture, Manhood in its maturity. In the *Caractacus*, one of the best English motives we know of has been treated by **Foley** with the admirable conscientiousness and knowledge of form in which, so far as we know, his work is never wanting. It would not be just to claim for it high imaginative character, or complete freedom from conventional execution:—but so far as the accomplished artist has carried it, his *Caractacus* is an excellent embodiment of stalwart strength, and patriotic devotion. We wish that the *Sardanapalus* could honestly be placed in the same

rank : — but this is a subject which would have required the full force of a Michael Angelo.—The *Achilles* of Banks is also in a grand manner, although it may hardly reach the height of the Homeric standard.

Theed's *Bard* is in the dull spasmodic style : his other fancy-subjects, *Rebecca*, &c. belong to the sentimental. But (at least in the writer's judgement) they do not make the least nearer approach to truth : with the strangely corded legs, gouged-out drapery, and rudely blocked surfaces of **Bell's** *Dorothea*, they cannot rank in the same Art which has given us **Behnes'** *Cupid*, or **Foley's** *Ino*.

If it is unpleasant thus to criticize works that have no redeeming quality, I find it, perhaps, more so when we see traces of a little natural gift, which might have done us service if educated by study and directed by truth. But of what use is a feeling for prettiness, when wasted on such result as **Munro's** *Child's Play*, *Maternal Joy*, *Child Asleep*, and the like ? — in which there is no limb physically possible, no surface rendered with any real modelling, the draperies obstinately untrue, the sentiment that of the Book of Beauty in marble ? There is but one standard for Sculpture,—the look of the real thing. Think of a child's lithe limbs, — so delicate and yet so firm, — so mobile and so well balanced, — look at the *Child's Play* or the *Sound of the Shell*, — and it will not need much examination to feel that these vague writhing forms have not even a good doll's likeness to human children. In the natural history of Sculpture, we must class them under *Mollusca*, not *Vertebrata*. I wish the details redeemed the misfortune of the design ; but here again, beside the petty finery of ornament and foolish parade of flowers, everything has, I know not whether to be learned, or to be unlearned, — so systematically are hands, eyes, lips, and feet slurred and misrepresented. Gaps, scratches, lumps, and swellings here stand, alas ! for the masterpieces of Nature's modelling ; the eyes are squinting cavities, the toes inarticulate knobs ; whilst the very dresses of the poor children, — in reality so full of charm and prettiness, — become clinging cerements of no nameable texture, and thrown into no possible folds. We should not have thought it worth while to scrutinize work of an ignorance so grotesque and babyish as all that we have ever seen by Munro with any detail, if it did not appeal in subject to popular interests, or if we had not some faint hope that, — arduous as are the steps from *Child's Play* in marble to art, — the author of these works may retrieve himself by recommencing his

art before it is too late ; meanwhile, as in case of the figures named before, one would think with Hamlet, that '*some of nature's journey-men had made men, and not made them well, they imitate humanity so abominably.*'

The *Morn* by Lough, and the sacred subject rashly touched by Adams, take rank under the same motto : but, as we have suffered more serious ill-treatment at their hands in Monumental Sculpture, the notes on their style are willingly postponed for a few pages. Work such as that of the artists criticized above, has long drawn on us, as our true sculptors know but too well, the ridicule or the contemptuous neglect of foreign judges. Certainly in Germany, France, and the North, the careful study required from sculptors would shame them from this slovenliness, which can only flourish under public apathy, unreasoning patronage, and the bad system of competition. The foreign galleries afford many works which, in this respect, may be a lesson to us, whether artists or spectators. **Rietschel's** *Times of the Day* are admirable ; with much charm, and life, and modelled in a true and fine style : points in which they seem to me superior to the similar subjects by Thorvaldsen. **Molin's** bronze group of *Norse Quarrellers* in the Nave is a most spirited poem,—for with such clearness and power is the story told, that it deserves the name. It is exaggerated, no doubt, in some points ; but this is the exaggeration of recognized truth, not of spasmodic ignorance :—a contrast which will be felt at once, if the little bas-reliefs are compared with those of Marochetti round the *Carlo Alberto*. We have not much of this excellence, although **R. Wyatt's** *Bather* has the grace and serious quality which this worthy follower of Flaxman put into his work, and **Woolner's** *Love*, with a charm and individuality of character rarely given in statues of this class, shows the artist's perfect mastery over truth of surface and sweetness of line. The execution also is uncommonly tender and conscientious.

Several pretty figures are exhibited by the **Thorneycrofts**, whose group of Royal portraits has been dramatized with happy fancy : and a word of praise is fairly due to **Macdowell's** unaffected *Reader*, and **Papworth's** *Young Shrimper* for originality and grace. The features of the *Egeria* have less of that impersonal look, already noticed as too common in works of this class, and the action is pleasingly seized.

There is much to like in this province of the art, although competent judges would probably not hold that even here, where no mythological difficulties occur, and where the dress may be treated

with a certain freedom, the modern work could fairly challenge the ancient. Yet it should also be remembered that this comparison is generally made between picked specimens from the old world,—in which high genius for Sculpture was always an uncommon thing. It may be more to the purpose to point out, that the art, even in Fancy subjects, lies still very much under the deathly spell of Imitation. Though a few instances may be found (as the *Love* and *Cupid* already noticed) in which reality has been the artist's standard, yet the criticism made at the outset applies in general. Until these bonds of copyism are thrown off, and we are content to follow the glorious artists of Greece in modelling what we see with their accuracy and finish,—and except thus, we do not follow them at all,—the noble art will never regain her only essential qualities, simple earnestness in the thought, and vitality in the execution.

One branch of sculpture, however, remains, which has always maintained more or less of life; and to this, with the recovery of a more vital manner in architecture, and the reunion of the arts so long divorced, we may fairly look with hope for the future. For Portraiture, since mastery in it was first reached (hardly before the age of Alexander), has remained, and must always remain, the foundation of excellence in sculpture, as it will finally be recognized in regard to painting. The corrupting influences of popular taste, already described, act with less immediate force on the bust than on the statue. Men are here a little less unwilling to compare the semblance with the reality, and wanderings from nature are more easily traced, or censured with greater freedom. It is true that here also the general false position of the art appears. Without leaving our own country to mark out the recent inanities of the Uffizj or the extravagances of the Louvre,—how few public or monumental statues can be named which do not fail, often utterly, from the conventional classical style, bringing with it feebleness in modelling and tameness in outline,—from meretricious trick, or shallow artifice,—from vacuousness and slovenly execution! Conspicuously placed as they are, how few have any interest or influence over the thousands who would be 'moved as by a trumpet' by the real effigy of a *Coeur de Lion*, a *Wellington*, a *Newton*, a *Peel*, a *Franklin*,—of the Sovereigns in their succession, or men of local mark and position! But the course of our public statues is generally much alike; they are ordered by a committee, officially praised by a neat newspaper paragraph on the day after they are 'unveiled,' detected

as counterfeit art by the week's end, and followed next year by a brazen brother of the same family.

Why all this is so, can be explained with fatal facility. Genius in this range of Sculpture is not more frequent than elsewhere, and it is a proud thing for any country if she possesses one man of such stamp as (let us say) Verrocchio. If none such, we may at least have honest careful art of lower order :—but when the occasion imperatively requires genius, and none exists, common sense dictates that our monument should wait more favourable days. High art is like Poetry, and comes by laws we neither comprehend nor control. England, however, does not appear in so denuded a state. It will be seen presently that the writer considers we have two portrait-sculptors whom he would rank as really great : it is much that it should be so :—but the common belief of the promoters,—supposing that the plan has not been organized simply as a predetermined piece of patronage,—seems to expect that we have many men of this rank, to any one of whom the order may be ‘safely confided.’ Who would act thus in any Fine Art but this? Who would expect to obtain a first-rate Landscape, or a first-rate Ode, by inviting sketches, or advertising a competition? But our general procedure is amply accounted for by the general indifference to sculpture, already commented on. For the continual necessity that monumental statues should be provided, united with the hopeless indifference of the public, naturally generates a succession of what, in reference to art, must be named counterfeit wares ;—which passing undetected for the moment, and bringing such large profit, may be manufactured without any troublesome study or toil,—nay, it is said, in some instances, almost without the supervision of the nominal artist. What must follow this position of the art?—Of course there are most honourable exceptions ; but too frequently the tradesmanlike order (who can wonder?) is carried out in a spirit which it would be flagrant injustice to commerce to call tradesmanlike. The work is executed with a shameful slovenliness, or a spasmodic affectation ; truth and nature murdered in every line and surface ; in a word, for in a cause like this, it would be base not to speak out, we have statues in the style of those already named. Thus a great country pillories her heroes !—unless a too-patient public be roused to outcries of irrepressible disgust, till the black monster, chased and hooted from the square or the cathedral, perches at last on the top of an arch, or takes refuge in a patron's garden.

Work of this character is unhappily not absent: but before specifying it, a few words may be given to the Busts. Here, if anywhere, one might hope to find a good style prevalent. A portrait in stone is both a comparatively simple thing, and can at any rate be tested by reference to the original. Yet nowhere is our manufacturing spirit more painfully visible. I have noticed the evil influence of Lawrence's art over portrait-painting. Very similar has been the influence of Chantrey. Before his time truth to the real features, variety in the surface, careful completeness of detail, were at least required in a bust. Of course without the penetrative imagination these elements will not yield a first-rate likeness: yet in the hands of **Nollekens** they gave us many admirable heads of lasting interest: (*Sterne, Pitt* and others). **Chantrey** was gifted with a fine eye for the picturesque in sculpture, and a particular power over the light and shade of masses. These qualities, combined with a happy ease in seizing,—not character, over which I have never seen one bust by him that gave the clear sense of mastery,—but the air and look of life, might have given him a really high and enduring place amongst our artists. But he sacrificed all to manufacturing temptations; quick returns, and easy profits: and the slovenly showiness, the false effect and mechanical flattery which mar most of his works, may be referred to as a lesson how widely apart are the paths of serious art and clever cupidity. No surer proofs that a man is no real artist, then when, (as with Chantrey,) only his earliest work shows care, and when he presumes to remodel the faces of great men to suit his conventional idea of their qualities. Wordsworth's features were strong and rugged:—those in the bust are smooth and characterless: his face expressed intense meditative self-concentration,—this, an uncontrolled feebleness. Even the chin has been brought forward an inch, as the sculptor's homage to the Apollo Belvedere and what he fancied poetical inspiration! If Chantrey's work be so false in a head known to the writer, how should he trust the artist when he represented men who lived before the photograph? Almost all his busts show the same method of work; we can see that the features must have been cleverly manipulated, for they are not natural forms; the hair left rough, and the towel over the shoulders, are expedients to make the smoothed bosses or coarse facetting which enlivened by a few drill-holes, uniformly stand for surface, look less incomplete. Gods, as Homer might have said, call this, 'ideal treatment;' but men must give it a much less Olympian epithet.

Work such as this is bad work, even had Chantrey's better qualities been tenfold multiplied:—but how shall we speak, when we turn from the master to the school which his example founded? Large allowance must indeed be made for the tyranny of fashion and the carelessness of spectators, which, no doubt, have stayed the progress of some who have not had strength enough to disregard all for truth. But truth does not appear to me to admit such excuses for the portrait and monumental sculpture of Noble, Theed, and Adams. So far as my observation has extended, it gives an indescribable impression of sheer, hopeless, incurable inefficiency. It is not simple ignorance of form or indolence of execution that their busts and monuments display; it is not imperfect sense of character, or absence of grace and imagination:—but work so blunt, coarse, and mindless, that I know not how to bring it within the common terms of criticism. It is as difficult to describe it as it is to analyze nonentity itself. Where we are unfamiliar with the man thus misrepresented, we can at least refer to common nature, and this will tell us that the human face,—that masterpiece of divine art,—has more in it than the careless lumps and heavy furrows of **Noble's** work, the cold apathetic vacuity of **Theed's**, the intense and unheroic vulgarity and ungainly shapelessness of **Adams's**. On the same bad eminence we must rank the *Cromwell* of **Bell**, and the *H. Lawrence* of **Lough**; figures so ungainly and commonplace, so false and feeble, that I should be ashamed to mention them in a criticism on serious art, if they did not force themselves on our eyes, with **Brodie's** frightful *Architecture* by their huge obtrusiveness. And the building contains two or three other colossal figures, more conspicuously placed, which must have been named with these, if affectionate respect for their subjects did not restrain us. When the words grace, imagination, or truth to character are used, tacit reference is made to that more exercised taste which should properly be called judgement: on these points I appeal to the true artists of the day, in whose interest I write, for confirmation of my remarks:—but on simpler points it will, I think, be enough to ask spectators to 'look and pass on' before the works now censured. Is there here any trace whatever of that variety in surface, alternately tense and soft, which the texture of every human face presents, and without which the sculptor can give his labours no life?—life so full of detail, of mobility, of infinite subtleties, of the soul, in a word, by some ineffable magic stamping dust with the seal of immortality? Where the main

point in a portrait is missed so utterly, we can hardly expect truth elsewhere;—the drapery of these artists must seem false and impossible to the least-educated eye, whilst the forms over which it is hung are those not of the life, but the lay-figure.

Whether or not the writer's judgement on these works command assent, he thinks that a few words will suffice to justify the tone of his censure. To portrait-sculptors is committed a high task, and a serious responsibility. The nation trusts her great men to them; they are charged to carry down through the ages the actual likeness of those who will be to the future what Milton or Bacon are to us. We all know how brilliant and attractive are the written portraits of such men, when drawn by some vivid master. Yet there is always a void felt,—a sense of blankness and as of the shadows of the grave,—if we cannot complete the Book by the Picture. Without this, our heroes were like acquaintances known only by letter: with what penetrative genius in portrait can give, they become familiar friends. And we may often most thankfully accept work less excellent, if the likeness be honestly set forth:—but such false images as Adams' *Wellington* and *Burdett*, Noble's *Barrow* and *Lyons*, Munro's *Armstrong*, Theed's *Hallam* and *Lawrence*, are a disgrace to English art now, and an outrage on remote generations.

The Monuments of one more artist must be classed, on rather different grounds, in this series of what seems to me absolutely false and mischievous. But before giving decisive proofs of this statement, I must turn to the sounder art here exhibited:—noting briefly, that the foreign specimens do not afford materials for fully ascertaining how the style stands abroad. The model from **Rauch's** elaborate *Frederick* will hardly give those who do not know the original a fair idea of the monument. It misses the imposing impression, and cannot render the carefulness and completion of the whole;—nor, on the other hand, does it convey the unfortunate and confusing effect produced by the mixture of life-size and colossal figures, the unconnectedness of the groups, much increased by the management of the corner horsemen,—or, I may add, on much better authority than my own observation, the want of vitality and character in the head of Frederick. The highest series of bas-reliefs has great beauty.

In the more modern English school the *Lyndhurst* and *Clarkson* of **Behnes** are samples of splendid modelling, and the head of his *Babington* is full of life, although we cannot extend the same

praise to the drapery. **Foley's** work (*Selden*), as usual, takes high rank by its seriousness and conscientious completion. The *Goldsmith*, although less happy in seizing character, deserves much honour for its adherence to real dress : it is a proof,—strange that proof is required!—that when the figure is unaffectedly treated, we no more dwell on what the tailor did for the man, than if the Poet of the *Village* were himself before us. The busts by **Butler**, **E. Foley**, **Bailey**, and **J. S. Westmacott**, show that they are the creations of art,—though of an art which through general want of taste and interest is satisfied with too little. Many more are the productions of steady manufacture : they suffer under the blight that rests on sculpture, and will only make way for better work—when patrons and spectators insist upon it.

We have one more sculptor, to whose busts the Englishmen of far-off centuries will look with confidence that here they may see the authentic likeness of some who, even at that distance, are not likely to be forgotten. No one, probably, who now sees the *Tennyson* and *Brooke* with their companion works, will not feel that portraits, so full of life, expression, and variety,—individual to every line of the hair, dress, and attitude,—have so much true vitality that they can hardly fail of faithfulness. It must be so that they dressed, and bore themselves,—so that they smiled in animation, or meditated in repose. But the likeness does not end here.—Reverting for an instant to what I said on the historical function of the Portrait-Sculptor, it would not require the power of Macaulay or Carlyle to deduce from **Woolner's** busts the characters of the men in their real inner essence :—the chivalrous energy of the Colonizer, the strength and inventiveness of the Engineer, the well-known humour and rugged force of the Geologist, the majestic calm and profound feeling to which we owe the *Idylls* and *In Memoriam*. So again with the *Lord Bacon*, where we have not only a Monumental figure of the true kind, as simple and dignified in the main lines as refined and truthful in the details,—but a 'vera effigies' of the philosopher as he may have stood, when, as the action of his hands suggests, he was demonstrating to some theorist of the day the necessity of a foundation for science in the reality of things :—laying great bases, we might fancy, for that triumph of Man over Nature of which these halls contain trophies, such as the mind of Bacon was alone able to anticipate. These works, by force of the life that is in them,

have carried us, as if digressively, to other regions than art : — but Art fulfils her office only when she does so.

How a great artist learns the secret of his conception and his handling, as was remarked in the instance of Turner, could not be put into words, even if it were not in itself a mystery. But, looking at what he reveals by his practice, we can see that the means by which this excellence has been here attained are those common to all such art,—perfect truth and consummate tenderness. What I noted before on the union of executive completeness with imaginative power holds as strictly true with Woolner's work as with that of the Elgin figures: it is finish in the true, rare sense, infinite and mysterious, and as full of thought as of delicacy. How difficult to have given this, and yet not sacrificed breadth and repose! yet without these qualities in even balance we have no first-rate sculpture.

The *Constance and Arthur* has allowed the fullest scope to the artist's imaginative genius. Here we have a little history told or suggested; the natural deficiency in hearing and speech serving, by one of the holy compensations of Nature, to bind two children together with ties of more than common tenderness. This is shown in the beautiful lines of their attitude, where though the girl takes the part of protection due to her age, yet few will fail to recognize in the look of both a pathetic air of appeal to each other's sympathy;

A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

To praise the execution of this lovely work would be only to repeat what has been said above in regard to the artist's other performances: but, with special reference to the frequent remarks I have made upon vitality of action and surface, I would request the reader's careful attention to the difference, so subtly and yet so simply given between the tense and the yielding, in the limbs of the boy and in what can be seen of the girl's right shoulder,—and to the balanced action of the group. It is stationary, indeed, for a group can rarely dispense with this quality: yet we see, by the slight pressure given in one foot of each, that they feel each other's weight, whilst the boy, by the grasp of the left hand on the right, and that again on the knee, and the tension of his body forward, is guarding himself from the heavy thrust with which, if asleep or helpless, he would lean against his sister. Whilst in all these main features the work is thus

thorough, the drapery is raised to an almost equal degree of value and interest by the same one and only method,—truth to nature. Here we have no ‘conventional’ or ‘generalized’ fashions of shuffling over labour and difficulty; the essential character of the material is given, without imitative pettiness: the form and action of the figure within preserved with such airy and vital accuracy that (as always in real life) it animates the dress: the folds, with a fidelity so uncommon that I know not where to look around for an equal example, give the actual amount of substance, neither arbitrarily following, nor coldly concealing, the child’s person:—whilst the sculptor has been rewarded for this devoted truthfulness and loyalty to nature by a harmony and charm of line which might have moved the envy of Raphael or Leonardo.

Art like this is great Art, in the high immortal sense: always rare in Sculpture, in her present condition it is inevitably rarer yet:—I have therefore dwelt on these examples of it with some minuteness, as standards by which visitors may judge for themselves how far the conditions of vital excellence are observed in modern work.* The man who can do this would assuredly carry these gifts of truth and tenderness with more majestic display into monumental Sculpture:—nor can any region of the art more imperatively demand them. Meanwhile, and before I pass to sculpture which stands in a contrast with Woolner’s hardly more shameful than diverting, I will suppose that the reader, in his passage to the Horticultural Gardens, stops awhile amongst the wonders of the Nave to examine **Foley’s** equestrian group of *Lord Hardinge*.

He will do so wisely: for of the hundred trophies within that hall which demonstrate the successful advance of ‘much-labouring man,’ there is no other such triumph of Art, no, nor any near it. I need not speak of it in detail:—for the bronze of this work, when temporarily exhibited in England, drew forth from all the Sculptors of the day a unanimous verdict, that as an equestrian figure it ranked

* Such art is so scarce, that I trust I may be allowed to mention the Animal designs by Julius Haehnel of Schmiedeberg in Prussia:—an artist, I believe, not represented in this Exhibition. Widely different as they are in subject, they have a greatness and a grace, an intensity of vital character and a completeness in the execution, which place them in the rank of the best works in serious Sculpture. France has some very clever modellers in this sphere, but I have seen no bronzes by them which could stand before the sterling excellence of Julius Haehnel’s.

alone in excellence amongst those which this country has produced in that most arduous style. It stands now in Calcutta, and there, when evening allows men to wander into the open square, the Arab dealers come together, and comparing Foley's Horse with the points of the best blood of the Nejed or the Hejaz, they are said to pronounce his work 'the work of the Genii;'—for none else could have moulded the surfaces with such truth, or infused vitality with such power.

It was the writer's first intention, when he learned that the model of **Baron Marochetti's** Turin group was to be exhibited in Gardens, to have given it that serious criticism which so imposing a mass naturally seems to demand. Careful examination of much else by the same hand, for many years, could not, indeed, lead him to anticipate sterling merit here; for the study which began with a belief in the excellence of Marochetti's work, had led, gradually and surely, to a conviction of its baseness: if the *Carlo Alberto* proved own brother to the artist's other *Invertebrata*,—the *Coeur de Lion*, the *Scutari* monument, the Glasgow *Wellington*, the Apsley House *Angel*, the *Clive*, the *Peel*, the *Melbourne*; he was prepared to own it with unsurprized regret;—Yet who would not hope that so very clever a sculptor might at last have done justice to a subject which, if any, must call forth all his finish, spirit, and conscientiousness?—But it is due to any readers I may have, to confess that these intentions have fairly broken down before this crowning—I should think, this final masterpiece of colossal clumsiness. It is simply impossible to use the same forms of speech in reference to sculpture such as that of the artists last criticized, and to such absolute, ineffable scorn or ignorance of all its requirements as the Baron here exalts before us, in a pyramid which may vie, for taste and beauty of composition, with the best centre-pieces of the confectioner:—it is like passing from Davy or Faraday to the art of the mountebank, or the science of the spirit-rapper.

I will beg the spectator to recall what was before said on the responsible function of the Monumental Sculptor, and with that to think of the profound interest which,—only less in England than in Italy,—belongs to a monument commemorative of the first steps and one of the first martyrs in the glorious Deliverance. Italian readers,—should I have the fortune to find such—will require no such appeal either to their native taste, or to their sympathy with the Royal patriot here misrepresented. And then, as in all other cases, I would only ask spectators to use their own eyes, and they will (I think), find that

few qualifying or regretful phrases need alloy this condemnation. It is only difficult to specify details, because criticism can hardly take hold of work so ingeniously and spiritedly negative. Addison somewhere justly praises the impregnability of Nonsense. Nonsense, he says, 'stands upon its own basis like a rock of adamant, secured by its natural situation against all conquests or attacks. If it affirms anything, you cannot lay hold of it; or if it denies, you cannot confute it. In a word, there are greater depths and obscurities, in an elaborate and well-written piece of Nonsense, than in the most abstruse and profound tract of school-divinity.' Thus it is with the *Carlo Alberto*. Those who cannot at once see through the effect of size and specious audacity, and discover that this is nothing but an amateur's worthless sketch magnified into Memnonian proportions, will not be convinced, even by a right arm which goes straight out from the trunk without a crease in the dress, or a trace of muscular motion, swaying its ignorant curves like a branch in the wind, and with the left, (which in its turn hangs at the shoulder like a dislocated doll's,) is covered with furrows, intended possibly for a coarse model of stratification:—by a face constructed out of a lump of chin and a dab of moustache:—by the 'padded shape' which far more resembles a round of brawn with three cord-marks round the middle of it, than a human body:—by legs, (please inspect the left) as round and rigid as water-pipes;—and all this, and much more of the same quality, set bolt upright, like a child's toy-rider, astride on that too-celebrated animal, with the forequarters of one charger and the rear-parts of another,—which does duty already in Westminster. Then descend (it is hardly the right word) to the remaining work—take the bas-reliefs, crowded by figures drawn with all the accuracy and finish of the prints in the Penny Novelist,—admire the grace of the Zouave on the NW., the well-known 'Sydenham Pantaloon' on the diagonal corner, the modelling in the lower parts of his neighbour, where—so far from the least suggestion that they cover human limbs—the breeches are the very image of those which Jack hangs out upon the forecastle, when he has washed and starched them in the Atlantic.

Such is the fashion in which a countryman of Verrocchio and Ghiberti, Giotto and Michael Angelo, honours the first Italian king who drew his sword for a united Italy! A feeble parody of his feeble conception of the triumphant Richard is his offering to the memory of the broken-hearted Charles Albert!—If this be so, most justly will it be asked, how could such hands be entrusted with work

of such importance? I hope what I have said at the outset of my criticism on Portrait-sculpture will supply the answer. Meanwhile, lest the reader should fancy me alone in a judgement supported by such patent proofs, I will quote a few words from the long verdict of contemptuous exposure which was passed on a similar equestrian group, by the recognized leader amongst the French critics on Art. Gustave Planche, in 1845, thus wrote of Marochetti's *Duke of Orleans*.* After noticing, in language more forcible than mine, the lifeless features, ill-arranged lines, foolish horse, and vague attempts at the 'picturesque' style, he says: 'This sham spiritedness is simple puerility, and scarcely worth discussion. M. Marochetti's work is not monumental art; it is at the best a sketch in bronze—a child's toy seen through a magnifier; but this enlargement adds no value to the work. The horseman he shows us is badly seated, badly covered, swallowed up in his uniform, holds his sword awkwardly, and his face is devoid of any definable expression.' I wish space allowed me to add the great critic's admirable remarks on the right treatment of the Basrelief. 'These conditions,' he adds, 'are so elementary, that I am at a perfect loss to comprehend how M. Marochetti has neglected them. There are soldiers here like the leaden playthings of the nursery: it is almost impossible to guess whether there is a body beneath the dress. We have here no question of style, not even of grammar—it is nothing beyond mere matter of the Alphabet of art. To break these conditions is the same as to be ignorant of spelling.'†

Such work deserves no further severe criticism; whilst giving it, indeed, one cannot help thinking the *Carlo Alberto* has been placed here in a spirit of fun, and recalling the anecdote of a good-natured author, who laughed as he heard the pit hiss his play from the stage, and said, *Have they found me out at last?*—We, at least, wish to part from Baron Marochetti in this humour; we spare him examination of his other works; and, with reference to them, will only hint at that law of nature which confines even the humblest success to those who make the very utmost of the single talent. His busts sometimes show a vivacity and cleverness of handling which—adding of course know-

* This group was removed from the Court of the Louvre in 1848, and replaced by a figure of Francis I, of which it is enough to say that its style is in perfect harmony with the coarse and mindless sensuality of its subject. The writer thinks it must be worse than the *d'Orléans*, but is unable to state the artist's name.

† *Revue des deux Mondes*, Août: 1845.

ledge of real form, with delicacy, care, and truthfulness in execution — might produce something which could be classed as serious Art. But it is a very long step from the heads we have hitherto seen by him,—and the sublime of monumental sculpture. If invited, as a few years ago the artist publicly invited us, to consider his claims in this sphere, we cannot accept the works brought in proof, as higher art than magnified statuettes, or rank them appreciably above the amateur figures of that other hour's idol of fashion, our almost-forgotten Count d'Orsay. It is the old old story with Marochetti, as it is with other sculptors of similar pretensions, here and elsewhere—the Frog trying to blow himself out to Bull dimensions. He may puff and be puffed—but he will never do it.

* * * Through the delay which has occurred in hanging the foreign pictures, it has been found impossible to complete this section in time for the first edition. The blanks hence arising, with some in the sculpture, will be shortly filled up. Meanwhile, the little historical sketch from the General Catalogue has been here reprinted by permission.

FOREIGN SCHOOLS OF PAINTING

FRANCE

FAIR France, a country rich in so many glorious memories, had given birth before this century to several distinguished Painters, whose influence over the style of their successors has never died out. But that great change which confers on French history so conspicuous a place in the modern history of Europe, moved the whole land with an impulse so mighty that we may accept the Revolution as a starting-point not less for the Literature and the Fine Arts of France than for her Politics. Under Lewis XIV, Painting, with much else, had fallen into a hollow and lifeless pomp; and though two men of original genius, Watteau (1684—1721) and Greuze (1725—1805), illustrated the following reigns, yet the courtly grace of the first and the sentimental grace of the latter only reflected the prevalent fashions of the day, and were insufficient elements to create a living School, able in any real sense to speak to the nation at large. Watteau and Greuze, with their contemporaries, appear to have worked for Paris alone, and its little coteries of luxurious or cultivated citizens: an unhealthy position, and in the last degree remote from the conditions under which art flourished in Athens or Florence or mediaeval France herself. David (1748—1825), in the opinion of his countrymen, restored Painting to the national sympathies by means at first sight the most alien from such result: — by infusing what was thought a Greek severity alike in the subjects, design, and execution of his pictures. This style, however, harmonized with the false Classicism of the Revolution before the predominance of its ‘First Consul:’ when that

stage was passed, and the vision of Roman Liberty melted into the reality of Roman Imperialism, the art of David became in part distasteful, in part was transfigured into the modern School of France.

It would be presumptuous to attempt in this summary a full review of recent Foreign art; but the general course of its development may, it is hoped, be sketched here without impropriety. Speaking thus, it may be said that French Painting appears obviously to differ from English in three main points; the subjects are far oftener 'Historical:' the drawing is more generally correct: the colour and execution less varied and less brilliant. These qualities are strongly exhibited by David's work: in which, indeed, Historical Painting is too commonly taken only in that infelicitous sense which limits it to scenes from long-past and pictorially-irrecoverable history. Few, indeed, are the subjects of ancient times which can be, or which have been, successfully rendered: unless treated (as in the naïf Middle Ages both by Painters and Poets) in the style of the day, or unless in themselves of very wide and vitally enduring interest (as scenes from Scripture), they may rouse a transient enthusiasm, but, like the mythology of Sculpture, have no real hold on common sympathies. It cannot be enforced and remembered too clearly, that the Present is the true reign of all high Historical Art. This was felt in France even by David's pupil Gros, but it is to the pupil of David's own closest follower Guérin,—Géricault (1791—1824)—a man who fulfilled much and promised more—that the liberation of Painting in France from the Classicalism of David is ascribed. Henceforward men felt free to choose their own style and subject; Schools of modern life, of landscape, and of romantic tales and fancy sprung up: and the art, as in England, became again a representation, more or less complete, of the general tendencies of the century.

Every age is, however, wont to overestimate its own originality. Far more of the Past survives in the Present than men easily recognize: and what appear the conspicuous qualities of earlier French art are yet conspicuous in the latest. The careful design and the historical direction of the great Poussin and of Le Sueur reappear in David: and the best qualities of David, united with a lofty tone of poetry and an ineffable tenderness of outline and expression, in Ingres. Every truly great Historical Painter is a master in Portrait: and the portraits of Ingres deserve the careful study of all who feel how little of the human face, God's masterwork on earth, is commonly

rendered by Painting or Sculpture. With Ingres may be classed (subject to that diffidence which should never be absent from foreign attempts at classification) Delaroche and Léopold Robert, although by them Historical art is taken in an increasingly wider, and hence more truthful and more popular, sense. Delaroche has dealt mainly with famous scenes from later European history, Robert with Italian life in the points most characteristic of the provinces of the country. Horace Vernet presents this School in its most rigorously modern aspect, choosing its subjects from the many wars of France during this century. The power, the dramatic vivacity, and generally conscientious design of these artists are familiar to us:—the courage with which they have ventured on vast or crowded compositions, on canvass and in fresco, is a characteristic not less worthy admiration.

Watteau is the only colourist for whom high rank is claimed in the earlier French School, which in this great quality for two hundred years suffered under the shadow and the chill cast from the later Bolognese Painters. But this tradition also was happily broken in modern times, and the value and charm of Colour have been illustrated conspicuously — one wonders they ever needed illustration — in the works of Delacroix and Décamps:—the former a copious and inventive artist in large works which, like Etty's, range over several styles, but are in all subordinate to the exhibition of that gift which (as most distinctively and emphatically the Painter's gift), where it exists in force, always makes itself predominant. French critics, who have seen Rubens in Delacroix, have compared Décamps to Rembrandt. He has the same love of Eastern scenes, the same love of rich colour contrasted with abundance of shade: but Décamps' residence in Egypt permitted him to penetrate oriental life and landscape more closely than was possible to the illustrious Hollander. Décamps did not, however, confine himself to such subjects; but, in whatever he touched, he has displayed a peculiar charm of tint and a decided originality.

Several of the artists hitherto named, by a decision which all visitors will regret, are not represented in this Exhibition; but some idea of their work is essential to a just understanding of the school as it exists. The bent, however, of the living oil painters in France, appears in general away from historical subjects, and turned towards the regions most popular with us,—familiar incident and landscape. Yet the national taste does not fail to make itself felt throughout. French colouring is still comparatively subdued: a low tone, accom-

panied by an indistinct or blurred outline, is frequently aimed at. This manner is not that gradation of individual tints and loss of outline from flush of colour which Titian or Turner practised; it appears rather a reaction from the severity of the school of David, combined with a general aim at delicacy of effect, and it has hence naturally found its way into pictures of familiar incident. The subjects are selected with greater point, freedom, and variety, than in England: the scene is not so commonly domestic. Yet it is worth note that in this last region of art (so conspicuously English), England possesses no painter equal in truth and tenderness of feeling to Edouard Frère. His works with those of Plassan, Trayer, Troyon, and others, display another excellent national quality; tact and ease in telling the story, and a determination not to exceed the limits of the style adopted by the artist. The aim may not always or often be high—but it is rarely not attained. The picture—and the remark might obviously be extended much beyond Art, in France—is almost always definite, hardly ever widely suggestive. But it must be enough here to indicate that sympathy between painting and the national mind in other respects, which stamps all art, when genuine and vital.

This quality is, however, less consonant to landscape than to figure-subjects. Human action is a clear-cut thing, a limited region, if compared with the boundless mystery of Nature. Many pictures here show that France is rising to power in landscape: the works of Watelet, Jeanron, Corot, Ziem, with those of Décamps and Marilhat, exemplify the variety of range attempted: yet, on the whole, we feel that the mirror which French art holds up by preference is less to Nature than to Human Nature. Even when Man is less prominent, living inhabitants,—as in the animal pieces of Troyon and the Bonheurs,—are not only introduced as accessories, but form a main feature in the design.

It may lastly be noticed that the same dominant interest in human life has led to much vigorous rendering of foreign manners, or incidents from the earlier world of Europe, treated in a more romantic or vivid manner than by the elder historical school, by Marilhat, Couture, Gérôme, and others. Here, too, we find what should not be passed over, as a frequent and honourable characteristic of the higher French art: definite and well-considered Thought. When this quality is an artist's aim, there is always risk of loss in the special aim of Painting—pleasure conveyed through form and colour:—yet, when the work

is in the hands of a Gérôme, the result will be one of those triumphs rare in the annals of any art,—pictures which, from the least to the most cultivated spectator, leave a remembrance not to be wiped out. It is not in his own country alone that the career of this painter is watched with hope and appreciation. From the splendid drawing, firm rendering, vivid characterization, and thoughtful choice of subject shown in the ‘Augurs,’ the ‘Gladiators,’ and the ‘Phryne,’ Europe may fairly expect what—within the peculiar range which Gérôme has chosen,—can hardly fail to be masterpieces.

GERMANY

Of the German school it is more difficult to speak than of the French. Truly reflecting one noble side of the national mind, it has thereby passed under influences with which foreigners cannot easily or completely sympathize. Speculative thought and theory have here held sway over Art not less powerful than elsewhere has been often exercised by Fashion; prescribing to the painter the subjects and style of his work, and taming the wild Teutonic imagination to academic or ascetic discipline. The works of the great schools of modern Germany appear strange to those who are accustomed to think of true art as something closely identified with freedom; to look for nature, exhibited in actual life or in landscape, and to expect skill, force, and sweetness in the management of oil colours. Yet the direction of German taste has been strictly controlled by those large underlying laws which may be traced everywhere in the history of art, and can alone furnish just explanations of its development. Painting, with literature, had, during the last century, fallen in Germany under French influences: here and there some national feeling was shown, and a solitary and neglected artist, Asmus Carstens, of Holstein, practised a severer style; but in the main it appears to have rarely exceeded the limits of decoration. There was abundance of imitative work, and what may be called furniture painting, but nothing which answered to the life and power which, towards the close of the period, the great writers Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Richter, and many more, threw into the literature. These men, though not artists, occupied themselves much with the abstract theory of art, and a philosophy of Painting and Sculpture was formed amongst the many philosophies to which that age gave birth. Then followed the invasions from France: the national spirit was roused, and it became

a natural feeling that the style which was least French would be most genuinely German. A definite plan was settled by the painters studying in Rome in 1810, and laws laid down for the subjects, aim, and execution of the art of the future.

Hence arose the two principal schools between which painting is yet chiefly divided from Dusseldorff to Vienna. Mediaeval religion has been the main theme of Overbeck, Steinle, and Deger: mediaeval and ancient history of Cornelius, Schnorr, and Kaulbach. The artists of the first school have worked most at Rome: those of the historical or epic at Munich, Berlin, Dresden, Bonn, and elsewhere. Between the styles of these men, with their numerous scholars, great differences of course exist: Cornelius and Kaulbach display much boldness and variety of invention, suitable to the vast wall-paintings with which they have covered the churches and palaces of Germany:—the religious painters have worked more frequently on a smaller scale and in oil colours, and their pictures, like those of the early artists whose style they have followed, aim rather at sweetness and repose than energetic action. And besides these two main schools, modern Germany has produced numerous painters of incident, amongst whom the Dusseldorff artists, Schadow, Bendemann, Sohn, Köhler, and Hildebrandt, are the most celebrated:—with Lessing, Achenbach, Koch, and others, who have pursued landscape.

It has not here been thought necessary to map out minutely the many German centres of painting, or fill the page with names unfamiliar in England. It will be seen, however, even from this brief sketch, that the scheme of a complete national school has been carried out, and the various fields in the fair realm of art all attempted in Germany. Yet through all ramifications and divergencies, a strong general similarity exists, derived from what has been already noticed as the starting-point of the school. What German art as a whole seems to want, is Life. Everywhere an English spectator will be reminded that the foundations of the modern style were laid in a complete and erudite theory: that its first masters were of opinion that ‘reference to nature may easily interfere with the ideal character of a composition,’ and that ‘power of colouring and facility of hand are unfavourable to high art.’ This is that profitless theorizing to which I have already called frequent,—I think not too frequent,—attention; and this Exhibition contains many proofs of the result. Yet we may see many proofs of a lofty and serious Endeavour, of a predominant Thoughtfulness, of a careful study of approved ancient

masters. But the main efforts have been laid out on large mural paintings; and hence, of all modern schools, the German is least completely represented in any Collection. A man must visit Munich or Berlin to see those vast philosophical histories and epics by Kaulbach and Cornelius, which read, we might almost say, like so many pages from Herder or Hegel. In these the Idea is everywhere dominant: but from them, to the smallest scene of common life or landscape, the national characteristics here indicated will rarely be found absent.

HOLLAND AND BELGIUM

The course of modern art has been dissimilar in these contiguous countries. That intensely powerful national spirit which so distinguishes the Dutch, has hitherto mainly kept their school from that close approximation to the French which has occurred in Belgium. Scenes of common life, landscapes, cattle, and inanimate things, treated often with admirable skill, were of old the glory of Holland. The same choice of subject still prevails. Schotel and Schelfhout have gained distinction in landscape: Van Os and Van Stry, Ommeganck, and Meissonier of France, with other native Hollanders, present more or less of the qualities which are admired in the cattle and figure painters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In Belgium all trace of the art of Rubens and Vandyke had long since faded and been replaced during the first thirty years of the century by the style of David, whose influence over Flemish painting outlived his influence over French. Meanwhile in David's native land Painting had taken a new and more animated life, which in due time was felt in Flanders. Wappers in 1830 began against the dead false classical style a reaction which—by more than mere coincidence, we may believe—coincided with the birth of the Belgian kingdom. He was rapidly followed by Leys. These men have been both mainly devoted to historical subjects of national interest, but their art does not deviate into those more poetical and primitive regions which have found so much favour in Germany. It has been the distinction of Wappers that he made the first great step towards a living style; but the colour of Leys and the insight he shows into character deserve special notice.

Rather later in the same direction has followed Gallait, whose

Historical art has a tone of pensive sentiment. He has also attempted subjects from romance and poetry, and thus forms a link between the school just noticed and the school of common life and incident. This style, with the landscape work of De Marneffe and others, has, however, as yet hardly received the development which was so rapidly reached by Leys and Wappers, who, by natural instinct, turned at once to that branch of the art which, from Van Eyck to Rubens, was the characteristic of Flemish painting.

The Schools hitherto noticed are either known in England by many examples or belong to countries with which Englishmen are familiar. Yet in regard to them, the criticism of a foreigner must be given with diffidence; and even if the main lines have been here correctly laid in, it cannot but be that natives of Germany or France will find the details or points of view require a forbearance which (it is hoped) will be exercised. But from the specimens of remoter or less developed Schools which we are now allowed to study, it might be rash and unsafe to attempt even a sketch of Painting in the Russia and Scandinavia of to-day (although here Calame in Switzerland, Tidemand in Norway, Lindegrün in Sweden, may be specially noted),—still less in countries which, like Spain, Italy, and America, appeal so decidedly to the Future. Artists of ability have not been wanting here during this century, yet it is probable that in none of these states has Art yet taken a form which fully represents the nation as it is,—certainly none that answers to what is anticipated by those which in a certain sense we may call the more settled nations of Europe. Englishmen at least will not fail in such sympathetic anticipation: they will welcome with warmth the proofs which other countries give that Art, with vigorous Peace and manly Liberty, Free Thought and Free Action, has entered also on the ways of life:—convinced that Painting, advancing always at even pace with the national mind, will become everywhere more individual at once and more universal, and in confident hope that the fair promise of many lands will ere long be followed by fairer fulfilment.

ENGRAVING

THIS, of all the Fine Arts of design the most popular and the most generally diffused, appears to be at the same time that of which the technical processes are least familiar. It is, therefore, thought that a few words mainly on this point will be the most useful introduction to the masterpieces of modern work here collected.

The three forms of Engraving which include almost the whole art employ respectively the surfaces of Wood, Stone, and Metal to give the impression. In the first, the ink is laid *on* projecting portions: in the second, on portions of *plane* surface chemically prepared to receive it: in the third, within hollows sunk *below* the surface, whence it is removed by wiping. In Wood Engraving what the artist cuts away, forms the light; what he leaves, the lines. In Lithography,—whether plain or in colours,—what he lays on with ink or chalk is repeated upon the paper. It is Metal only that reproduces by the printing-ink the lines he cuts in. This latter art is therefore *Engraving* in the strict sense, and the one which bears the name by custom. It is also by its nature capable of the greatest variety in style, and of the most powerful or the most delicate effects in execution. The texture of wood does not carry cuttings of the freedom and complexity possible in metal, and strokes cannot be laid over strokes to strengthen and gradate the effect. Nor can the surface lines of lithography in its different forms, drawn with ink or chalk, approach the united force and tenderness of the lines which may be sunk into the steel or the copper. Engraving on Metal thus holds the first rank, and may claim precedence in our brief notice.

Of the three principal forms of Engraving on Metal that in which the design is entirely expressed by Lines is the most powerful, durable, and difficult. **Line Engraving** is, therefore, confined to important works, or those executed with sufficient care to be capable of bearing complete reproduction. In its first form it was thus employed by Raphael's Engraver, Marc-Antonio Raimondi, to multiply his master's designs, and by the great German painter, Dürer, to publish his own. These early works aim exactly at the effect of fine and finished drawings: small in size, simple in handling,

and never rendering either the texture of objects or the effects of sky and air in landscape, — they are, however, of unequalled grace and power in Form and Expression. As the Sixteenth century advanced and Painting degenerated, these qualities were lost from the companion Art: and before long Engraving took a new direction, attempting to reproduce not Drawings, but Pictures. This attempt required larger size, greater complexity and care in the set of the lines, more attention to the texture of objects and to landscape details; — above all, the preservation of the tone and light and shade of the original. Thus the modern style was gradually formed; aiming at translating Colours, whilst the old style facsimilarized Designs. To trace the development of this Art would be to sketch the progress of Oil Painting, to which it was subservient: it must suffice here to add that it was hardly before this century that Line Engraving fulfilled its object by reproducing the complete general effect of Pictures (so far as that effect does not essentially depend on Colour) — whether figure-scenes or landscapes.

France, where Line Engraving has long flourished, prepared the way by many admirable works; but the artists who probably contributed most to the final advance in Line Engraving are our countrymen, **Strange**, **Sharp**, and **Woollett**, who towards the middle of the Eighteenth century were among the first to take definitely successful steps in this larger manner. Strange is not always faithful to the expression of his originals, but in a blended tenderness and brilliancy of effect he is yet unequalled, and to his invention is due that curious network of lines by which modern Engravers aim at representing every surface, however varied. The *Charles I* (after Vandyke), the *Sleeping Child and Angel* (Guido), are amongst Strange's masterpieces. Sharp's work has more severity and meaning: his *John Hunter* (Reynolds) is of the highest merit. Woollett's prints from Wilson and Claude exhibit the beginning of that Art which within fifty years became capable of rendering the infinite sweetness and magnificence of Turner. Line Engraving was then carried on and refined by **Morghen** of Rome and **F. Müller** in Germany. The *Last Supper* (da Vinci), the *Transfiguration* and *Virgin with the Goldfinch* (Raphael), the *Aurora* (Guido), by Morghen: the *Madonna di San Sisto* (Raphael) of Müller are amongst their best pieces. At the same period lived **Longhi** of Milan, whose engravings, — the *Madonna of the Lake* (da Vinci), the *Magdalene* (Correggio), above all the *Marriage of the Virgin* (Raphael), are,

perhaps, the best masterpieces of this art for truth and tenderness. **Desnoyers** in France produced works of more vigour and brilliancy, but less faithful and delicate. His *Belle Jardinière* and *Virgin of the Rocks* are rather spirited translations than reproductions of what Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci painted. Amongst later Line Engravers, **Garavaglia**, **Toschi**, **Jesi**, in Italy : in France, **Calamatta**, **Dupont**, and **Forster** ; in Germany, **Mandel**, and **Keller** ; with the English **C. Turner**, **Miller**, **Cooke**, **Willmore**, **Finden**, the **Heaths**, **Raimbach**, and **Burnet**, deserve respectful enumeration.

In the French, **Bridoux's** *Holy Family* and **Lefèvre's** *Antiope* are brilliant pieces of work : but the majority exhibited belong to the more subdued and accurate style of H. Dupont. This style runs the risk of flatness in effect and too-mechanical execution : perhaps even Dupont's *Hemi-cycle* and *Holy Family* are not free from these qualities. **Francois** and **Flameng** supply excellent examples in *The Fountain* and the *General Bonaparte*.

German Line Engraving is partially represented by **Mandel**, **Parthey**, and **Keller**, whose *Theologia* from Raphael's fresco is an admirable specimen of fidelity to the style and expression of the painter.

Our own School appears here in force : we find a long series from **Hogarth**, inimitable in vigour and feeling : often rude and sometimes mechanical in handling, these are preeminently curious as the only finished works in which one of our greatest painters has expressed himself. Here, too, are **Strange's** *Charles I* : **Woollett's** famous *Wolfe*, *La Hogue*, and *Niobe* ; **Sharp's** admirable *John Hunter*. Of later men, **J. Heath's** graceful work from **Stothard** ; **Raimbach's** great series from **Wilkie** ; with many pleasing figure-subjects by **C. Heath**, **Finden**, and **Robinson**.

Comparison of the prints by **Doo** with those by **Dupont** and his School shows that we are now less successful in the severe style. But the Landscapes by **Miller**, **Allen**, **Cooke**, and **Willmore** are amongst the finest works in this class yet engraved :—although here that united force and freedom which Etchings reach may be often desiderated.

Much as we owe to an art which has placed so much of beauty and nobleness within the world's reach, it must, however, be owned that Line Engraving rarely has succeeded in a complete conquest over its besetting sin, — the sacrifice of the sweet largeness and repose which mark all good Painting, to the display of mechanical dexterity

in the conduct of the lines. The single Line Engraver who appears to have given his style variety and vitality sufficient to render not only the design, but the very touch and manner of the original, is **Schiavone** of Venice. His two prints from Titian's *Assumption* and *Entombment* are alone in the art for painterlike qualities, and show the breadth, freedom, and tenderness to which true feeling may carry it.

Those qualities, however, which Line Engraving so rarely shows, are in part supplied by the second great division of Metal Engraving: **Mezzotint**. In this art (invented about 1640, probably by the German Siegen, and carried out by Rupert, nephew of Charles I.), the plate, in place of showing a polished surface, is first evenly roughened. This roughness which, by retaining the ink, would produce, if untouched, a square of absolute blackness on the paper,—the artist scrapes away and polishes, more or less in proportion to the depth of tint required. Where he most polishes the plate, the printer's hand, removing the ink, leaves the whitest space:—the darkest lines are often cut in with a graver. Could this be done always or often with success, Mezzotint,—uniting the breadth of Painting with the sharpness of Line Engraving,—would be the most perfect style. But except in a few instances,—perhaps most notably by Turner in the prints from his own design,—this frequently attempted coalition appears to have foiled skilful hands by its deep inherent difficulty.

Mezzotint is one of those branches of art which for the last hundred years have flourished most in England. **Lupton** and **C. Turner** in pure mezzotint, **C. Landseer** and **Cousens** in a mixed style are our most conspicuous recent masters: but even their excellent works do not appear to equal that great series, mainly from the paintings of Sir J. Reynolds, which was produced in the eighteenth century by **S. Reynolds**, **M'Ardell**, **J. R. Smith**, **Watson**, and others. Few of these prints fail in the fine artist-like qualities of breadth and transparency: some (the *Duchess of Devonshire*, *Miss Bunbury*, *Collina*, are delightful examples) possess a charm and tenderness which will one day place them amongst the most treasured treasures of art. This style is so well represented, that I need not do more than refer readers to the walls.

In the two forms of Line Engraving hitherto noticed, the incisions are mainly produced by tools. In the third, **Etching**, the lines are mainly produced by acids. These lines are sketched with a fine point through a very thin acid-resisting coat of wax, laid first over the

copper or steel plate: the acid then cuts through the exposed surface to a depth regulated by its strength and the time allowed for its operation. Hence Etching, of all modes of Engraving, unites the greatest freedom with force; and as the process is not essentially different from that of Drawing, it has been followed by many Painters. Etchings have thus a value essentially their own: they are the actual work of the original designer, free from the coldness or errors of translation through another hand. Every European nation in turn has been successful in this art. The etchings of the School of **Overbeck** in Germany, of **Goya** in Spain, **Pinelli** in Italy, are more or less known and appreciated. But in our own days the brilliancy of the French and the delicacy of English artists have carried the method to an excellence which, except by Rembrandt of old, has never been equalled. Nor has even he surpassed the spirit, variety, and picturesqueness of **Cruikshank**,—since Hogarth our greatest Humourist in Etching. No one should pass over the specimens by these men, or Turner's outline-work for his *Liber Studiorum*.—**Whistler's** are effective plates in the modern French manner. They aim only at picturesqueness;—and reach it so decidedly, that they miss most other qualities.

Of the many forms of what, from the Stone employed at first as the plate, has been called **Lithography**, detailed notice will not be appropriate here, as the processes belong more to mechanical agency than to pure art. In all, the principle is the same: a drawing on a flat surface receives the ink, whether of uniform or varied tints; which by chemical means is kept from adhesion to the untouched portion of the surface. The rapid progress of this, the most easy and inexpensive of all modes of Engraving, during the forty years since its invention, especially in the reproduction of coloured designs (Chromotint) has been of service, where brightness of effect and absolute finish of drawing are not required. But until more keenness can be given to the lines, more depth to the shadows, more transparency to the general texture, the art will not take an equal place with Metal or Wood Engraving.

The **Woodcut** was the earliest method by which designs were reproduced, and has a long and curious history before the eighteenth century. By that time it had so greatly declined as hardly to rank amongst Fine Arts. From this date Wood Engraving was raised at once to excellence by the almost unaided skill of **Bewick** of Northumberland (1753—1817). It was, perhaps, happy that a man so

gifted should have found the field empty and have been thus able to begin the art anew. The older woodcuts had rarely attempted more than to reproduce drawings. Bewick added an effectiveness in light and shade, a delicacy and variety to his work which gave woodcuts henceforth an independent existence in pictorial expression. This great change,—one of the most decided in the history of art,—he effected by his unusual good sense, truth to nature, and tenderness in feeling. His mode of engraving was to bring out the design, where possible, by white lines laid on black: to build, as it were, from darkness upwards to light. He thus followed, it will be readily seen, the natural treatment or law of his material: for the lines cut into the woodcut form the whites, as those cut by the line-engraver form the darks, of the impression: and the proper direction of each art is indicated by this difference. Bewick's other gifts are shown in the exquisite simplicity, truth, and invention of his well-known woodcuts. An excellent selection fills one of the Frames. These cannot be too carefully studied: they have a directness in reaching their point, a breadth and largeness in style exactly analogous to the qualities of Velasquez. So little are perfection and greatness in Art dependent on size or material. Bewick's pupils, **Clennell**, **Nesbit**, and **Harvey** retain more or less of his fine manner.

If Bewick's peculiar excellence has not been since equalled, Wood Engraving has been both in France and England carried of late to a wonderful height in finish and brilliancy. The aim has, perhaps, lain too decidedly in this direction, as if in competition with etching:—a vain struggle, which risks loss in the natural treatment and natural effects of the woodcut, already indicated. By a return within the strict limits fixed by the material, by moderation and study from nature, the admirable skill which a multitude of artists have attained will, no doubt, be able to bring Wood Engraving before long to further perfection. The series by the **Dalziels** from Millais' very remarkable *Parables* form one example of what I venture to call the truer manner.

ARCHITECTURE

ARCHITECTURE—that art which literally comes home to every one, and of all the Fine Arts is the most directly practical—by a singular fate, is probably less a subject of popular thought and care than any other. Most persons have a certain interest in pictures: even if not much versed in painting, they contend for the right to please themselves. But when a building is in question, we hear with alacrity the reply, '*I know nothing of architecture.*' A brief sketch of the elements which compose the modern schools will, it is hoped, at once supply the main facts of the history, and explain the causes of an indifference so fatal to the progress of the art.

This story must begin far back, for in Architecture, from its essential nature and from the similarity of the wants which it provides for, practical experience has been the source of the changes generally made, and established types have always held a strong hand over free imagination. Nothing is more curious than to watch the slow steps by which men learned the simplest expedients, and the persistency of a few forms through every age between Nebuchadnezzar and the Nineteenth century. We are indebted here, as for the elements of almost all human knowledge, to ancient Greece. The **Greek** style was itself, indeed, founded on the earlier practice of Assyria and Egypt, but it was only by the reduction of African or Asiatic architecture to European ideas and climate in Greece, Italy, and Sicily, that it was able to influence later races. The *mode by which spaces are covered* is the simplest rule under which styles can be classed, as on this ultimately depends the greatest portion of those ornamental features which render Architecture a fine art, as distinguished from Building. The Greeks, for this purpose, confined themselves—the simplest expedient—to single stones laid flat from pier to pier. Their architecture was hence of the rudest quality in science; but for this they compensated by a delicacy in design, a completeness and exquisiteness in finish, never since equalled for a moment,—whilst its simplicity was set off by the contrasting elaboration of the sculpture for which their best buildings furnished little more than the plain frame. So few remains exist,

that it is hardly known how the Greeks applied their style except in religious buildings; but in these they perfected or invented various forms of ornament corresponding to varieties in the proportion adopted, from the strong severity of the Doric to the palm-like elegance of the Corinthian. And even from the scanty fragments of Attica and Sicily, it is clear that nothing could be less Hellenic than the coldness and monotony which has frozen imitated Greek architecture from the Romans downward. It is doubtful whether even the variety and picturesque arrangement of the pointed style surpassed what a pure Grecian city presented between the ages of Pericles and Alexander; and it is certain that an Athenian would have smiled at the ignorant and tasteless pedantry with which Roman professors chained the free forms of his architecture under the limits of the 'five orders.'

From the 'mother of arts' this style passed to **Rome**. Here the architecture of the *Lintel* found the architecture of the *Round Arch*, which the Romans in early times had learned from Etruria. By the union of what was good in these styles, a style more complete than either might, under favourable conditions, probably have been developed; but the Romans, never highly gifted in the finer qualities of the mind, were now the corrupt and degenerating inhabitants of a cosmopolitan capital, where fantasy and luxury ran riot in every extravagance of taste and puerility of imitation. Hence in those buildings where art is most essential, the Romans matured but one structural Form of permanent value, the *dome*,—but one Type of structure, the *basilica*. The vast influence of their style belongs not to art but to politics. Throughout those wide provinces which were held almost identical with the world, Roman architecture, as displayed in buildings of civic utility—the bridge, the aqueduct, the city gate, and theatre—shared in the dominant influence of the 'masters of all,' and covered the Empire, in length and breadth, with trophies of colossal common-place. The characteristics of the style may be summed up under solid and clearly-exhibited construction; round arches freely used for entrances and passage-ways, and, on a larger scale, for vaults; whilst the Greek style is felt in the ornaments and supports,—the latter either single circular columns or massy piers, but in each case confined to a single story, above which, if further height was required, the column and arches, with the flat cornice above them, were repeated. The style of ornament, from Syria to Spain, from Trèves to Tunis, exhibits no radical change from that of the Greeks, except a

gradual descent through floridity to coarseness; no vital feature whatever, so far as appears, was invented or developed. Looked at as art, the Roman style throughout—but most conspicuously in its ornamental or religious buildings—is an imperfect and generally awkward attempt to blend the two opposed styles which that uninventive race borrowed from their nearest neighbours in Southern Italy and Tuscany. It is a round-arched construction veneered with the pillared orders of a rectangular style. The Colosseum or Triumphal Arch of Constantine furnish familiar examples. It was a natural, an inevitable result of this mechanical and lifeless effort, that not only the beauty which these forms originally possessed, but their constructive utility should be sacrificed: that we should see pillars which give no support, and roof cornices which carry no roofing; whilst the arches which do the work lose the loveliness of their curve, through the huge unmeaning keystones by which they try to force themselves into the prominence usurped by the idle pilasters. A sense of Power, an emanation from the Majesty of the empire, given by vast masses and a construction of weighty simplicity, is the one redeeming quality of the Roman style. The Romans, commanding the resources of the world, were able to build huger piles than any other nation, and, in so doing, a great amount of constructive ingenuity was brought into play; but this cannot blind us to the fact, that their imperial architecture is barbarous in the true sense—a bastard and tasteless style, without even the merit of such originality as may be found in Japan or Mexico. Sense and feeling alike would set one fragment from the Parthenon of Athens before all the palaces which Nero roofed with gold, or the halls within which Diocletian gathered the population of the whole world's capital.

The altered state of society during the later years of the Roman Empire at Rome gave, however, a new impulse to Building, and constructive necessities produced forms which became of great value to Art. In place of Temples, with their *externally* decorated style, vast covered Halls of Justice (Basilicas) and Baths were now required. In these, attention was concentrated on *internal* effect and construction; and although it cannot be said that much taste was here shown, yet, as no precedents existed, and the builders had to think their work out unaided, common sense and the great mechanical skill of the Romans led them to inventions of vast importance in later times. They now boldly threw arches from pillar to pillar—uniting thus the main features of the Greek and Tuscan styles;

they roofed vast spaces with plain circular vaults; when the slender columns were unable to bear the weight, they united them with solid piers of masonry; when beauty or convenience required, they crowned the building with a dome, or closed it in a semi-circular apse. The Pantheon presents many of these discoveries. The circular form (originally derived from Etruria) became frequent for tombs and temples; and by the time of Diocletian, we find it covered with a bold octagonal dome, and surrounded, no longer with pillars as heretofore, but with an *arcade*—a form which proved of immense value.

No sooner had these changes taken place, than the Empire, divided between Rome and Constantinople, entered on its rapid fall. This—felt less visibly on the Hellespont than on the Tiber—would have checked all progress in architecture, if, meanwhile, that mysterious new life which had lurked hitherto in caves and catacombs, or shown itself in the martyrdoms of the arena, had not penetrated the ‘purple chambers’ of the palace, and mounted the imperial throne with Constantine. Christianity, proclaimed the religion of the Empire, first took possession of the vast Basilicas, which formed halls suitable for the assembling of the people, or the deliberations of the hierarchy. In cities where these were not found, or when destroyed by the invading tribes from the north, churches were built on the same plan, except that the vaulted roof was replaced by a roof of timber. For celebrating the mysteries of religion,—for baptism at least, and for burial—the circular temples or tombs supplied models; these round churches being often placed near the west-end of the Basilica. As Christianity spread, the Roman style underwent a gradual change; each province taking it up, and under the new influences of religion, interfusing a deeper sense in the decorations, and a greater variety in the plan. Separate *towers* were sparingly added, in a fashion to which (carried far west by early missionaries and surviving there) we may, with the greatest probability, trace those which are so peculiar a feature of Ireland. The circular plan was generally given up; the front removed to the west-end of the oblong Basilica, and the entrance-doors richly decorated with carving or mosaic. *External* decoration (not sought in the original Basilica) reappeared, and the walls were relieved by flat pilasters and arcades. Except, however, in these points, no essential modification was introduced, and it is hence convenient to call the altered Roman style, practised in all Western Europe, by

the name **Romanesque**. No precise limits can be fixed for its duration, and the dark ages of war and invasion render its genealogy indistinct in many countries between 500 and 900.

Meantime, in Eastern Europe, the greater wealth and quiet of the Empire, conjoining with the finer taste of the Greek races, and with influences which, as of old, reached them from Asia, produced in Constantinople and its neighbourhood that version of Roman style, which (in opposition to the Western Romanesque) is named **Byzantine**. Here, however, no essential new idea appears; the dome, which, on a large scale, became rare in the west, was carried out with splendid effect in St. Sophia; the arts of decoration in coloured marble and mosaic were employed with prodigality, and sculptured ornament, gradually forbidden the human form by theological feelings, took a tenderness and delicacy of invention, to which Rome afforded no parallel. But in so brief a sketch as this, Byzantine architecture cannot be considered with any fullness, and except in a few cases where East and West met, notably within Venice, it has hardly held influence beyond the limits of the Greek communion. We return to Europe proper.

Now came that mighty change for which the work of Rome had been the preparation. She had taught the world how nations might be ruled by the spirit of Law: the tribes of the north now showed how they might be animated by the spirit of Liberty. The long struggle to unite these frequently antagonist forces is the history of modern Europe. We have here to note the manner in which Architecture was affected by it. The characteristic of this art is, that none other comes so directly home to man, and every phase of the human mind, as it developed itself through ten centuries, is written on the buildings of the middle ages. It is in this capacity (it has been well observed) that 'Architecture is to be regarded by us with the most serious thought. We may live without her, and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her. How cold is all history, how lifeless all imagery, compared to that which the living nation writes, and the uncorrupted marble bears! how many pages of doubtful record might we not often spare, for a few stones left one upon another! The ambition of the old Babel builders was well directed for this world; there are but two strong conquerors of the forgetfulness of man, Poetry and Architecture, and the latter in some sort includes the former, and is mightier in its reality.'—How then did the nature of the great Teutonic

invading races express itself in the art we are here concerned with?

A few words will sum up this: they created the only genuine style of modern Europe. Hitherto, it should be noted, we have found but one such—the Greek. The Roman, Romanesque, and Byzantine styles are transitional from this; the principal elements in all, blending with the vigour and freedom of the north, took life again in the **Gothic**. Under this name, in accordance with the suggestion of Mr. Fergusson's admirable history, the whole architecture framed in Western Europe by the immigrant conquerors between 800 and 1500 will be here included, although from about 1150 onwards that Pointed form, to which the name has been restricted, began almost everywhere to supersede the Round-arched. As, however, the pointed architecture, though the most important and original development made in any style, is essentially only a development of the circular Gothic, it seems most correct to class them under the one name which points to the Teutonic origin of both; although the long centuries of ruin and renovation have rendered it impossible to ascertain what portion the race of Theodoric itself held in revitalizing the decayed civilization of Spain and Italy.

The first clear existing specimens, in fact, of the Gothic, appear due to the successors of the Goths in the valley of the Po. In the earliest Lombard buildings we find the plan and the details based on the Romanesque: but from the beginning, *vaults* are an essential feature. As that rich supply of single shaft columns which Roman buildings gave had been chiefly exhausted during the Romanesque period, and as the weight of vault required additional supports, columns were *coupled together* or united with *piers of masonry*: and presently by a change recommended alike by its effect and its constructive advantage, these shafts, in place of breaking off at the first story—as in the Basilica—were prolonged to the base of the roof-line. This point once reached, *ribs* were carried from them over the intersections of the vault: and the Gothic system of internal construction was complete in its main features. Externally, the weight of the roof was relieved by an invention for which the Roman plan of massive walls (as exemplified in the Pantheon) was a clumsy substitute: the invention of the *Buttress*. This, in the round Gothic, is always kept flat, and thus in some degree repeats the form of the merely ornamental Roman pilaster. Where the inner arches (as in Italy) were ordinarily of wide span, domes were

often employed as a form of vault: and this style was widely diffused thence through central and south-western France and the Rhine valley. In the doors, the plain lintel entrance which had almost exclusively prevailed from the Greek to the Romanesque styles, was abandoned, and they were treated as *many-pillared recesses*, on which the best efforts of the sculptor were more and more concentrated. As the Gothic thus advanced, through a thousand attempts, to harmony and vital union of features, a new and most attractive feature was, for the first time in architecture, added to the design. Hitherto, speaking in a broad sense, mass in *length*, not mass in *height*, had characterized the art from the Rhine to the Euphrates. But *Towers* were now incorporated in all the larger public buildings: and soon, under the general impulse to build higher, the lofty angular roof already placed (in part for protection against northern winters) over the tower or the church, shot itself upwards into the flame-like aspiration of the *Spire*. How much do we owe to an invention apparently so simple! Let the reader think what he would lose, not only of charm in effect and of picturesqueness in outline, but even of high and peaceful thought, were these features wanting from the view when at the close of the day's journey our road turns and before us over the level line of blue waters a hundred towers burn in the last light of sunset, and we know it is Venice:—or where over the massy orbs of forest and the quiet roofs gathered round it as if for familiar protection, some solitary spire goes darkly up, painted in purple haze upon the amethyst and sapphire sky, and announces the unknown village which is to be our resting-place.—And when the hours of happy research return, the Gothic charm which so allured us in the general aspect of twilight does not fail on nearer examination. What looked so fair in outline will be found complete and lavish in loveliness of detail. For the wild northern intensity which acquiesced at first in the Romanesque *plan*, has thrown all its life into the *ornament*, and covered doorways and capitals with the beasts and birds of chase, huntsmen and warriors, labourers and knights, or enwreathed them with stranger fancies, the dragons and wolves of the old mythology, the Runic knots of Fate, and the Serpent by which the world is to be devoured.

Whilst the round Gothic worked onward thus in the great southern river-valley of Charlemagne's empire to the perfection conspicuously exhibited in Verona, the style, carried northwards,

took other forms in the great cities that edge the Rhine. Here, between 1000 and 1200, the magnificent groups of domes and minaret-like towers were built which still adorn Cologne: churches, which in grand arrangement and balance of the parts, and in the admirable contrast kept between light and shade by the plain and the recessed portions, show that this form of architecture, if fully developed, would display qualities inferior to none ever practised. Other modifications of the same manner appear in Switzerland, Spain, and France; each varied with a life and freedom of which the very idea appears to have vanished from the modern world: the latest phase being that worked out by the Normans in their duchy. This followed their conquests to Sicily and England, and has preserved their name among us.

Then followed the last great change in living architecture: prepared, indeed, in all essential points by the work of the preceding centuries, and in many details known long before; yet, by its own intrinsic beauty, seeming like a new creation. It is certain that no style has ever excelled the **Pointed Gothic** in picturesque and lavish beauty of plan and of ornament, in the poetry of its lines, in the romance with which our own associations invest it. Yet the Gothic builders themselves, Suger of S. Denis, William of Canterbury, or Marc d'Argent of S. Ouen, would have been unconscious of that halo which Time, the beautifier, has cast over their masterpieces. Every essential feature of the pointed style, except the *tracery* of the windows, the *glass* that filled them, and the arched *flying buttresses* that sustained them, had been before practised; the same exquisite architecture which so moves us in the cathedral was familiar to them in the street; the only wonder of those inventive centuries, could they have foreseen it, would have been that their descendants should submit to the long unloveliness of Wimpole street, or admire the stone confectionary and frittered pettiness of the Rue Rivoli. It must not, however, be imagined that the pointed Gothic, on the whole,—though with large allowance for the sublimity of Egypt, the variety of India, the grace of Athens, and the vitality of its own immediate predecessor,—the most consummate architecture which the world has seen, rose from the ground 'like an exhalation.' Both in construction and in decoration it obeyed the spirit of the time. In the ornament we may trace the gradual softening and purification of the rugged northern mind which, gradually turning from those subjects of violence or fantasy already noticed—war and wild creatures, and visions of

spectral superstition, now sought its pleasure in the sculpture of sweet human forms, or enwreathed arch or capital, base and niche, with the herb of the field, or the leafage of the forest; festooning the level length of cornice with the hawthorn or the lily, and budding forth from the spire in crowns of floral loveliness. Whilst these are the essential characteristics of the *detail*, the *construction* is based on the passion for loftier and slenderer forms than the circular style appeared able to provide. And as the previous styles from their mode of covering spaces might be classed under the Lintel and the Arch, so the pointed Gothic might be named the architecture of the Gable, whether angular or curved. The latter form, commonly called the pointed arch, is obviously capable of greater height than the semi-circle; it had been long known in many countries, France included, as an occasional expedient; it now quickly became the law for all larger apertures. Two external causes aided the rapid growth of the style; the first, that the eleventh and twelfth centuries were the great age of mediæval building and monastic institution; the other, the discovery of that stained glass which clothed the churches of the time with a glory surpassing any internal decoration hitherto practised. To contain this, the windows were enlarged; to frame it, the bars of wreathed masonry, known as tracery, were invented. Soon the ambition of skilful masons, revelling in the radiance of blazoned saints and gem-like arabesques, raised the ribbed roof to a dizzy height, and placed it on piers divided by walls of coloured crystal. The real wall was planted without the building in forests of detached buttresses,—the sculptor peopled with Scripture Histories every vacant space and ‘coign of vantage,’—and the Cathedral of the middle ages was created; an embodiment in stone and glass and woodwork of all that was most lovely and most daring in the minds of men; a concentration of all they admired here, or hoped for hereafter.

To the builders of Central Northern France the clearest evidence proves that this invention is due; nor, except in France and England, whither it was carried so soon that the style there went through a living and original development, was it truly understood during the Middle Ages. Space, however, fails to trace a course, which, after two centuries, through many causes, though none inevitably inherent in the pointed style itself, led to a gradual decline, even in France and England; whilst in Spain, Italy, and Germany, the style was never really understood, or exhibited in its force and purity. In Venice, indeed, Gothic forms, uniting with the Romanesque of Con-

stantinople, produced a manner of extraordinary grace and individuality, and one so directly adapted to modern city requirements, that only the modern indifference to architecture can have prevented its introduction. But we must pass to its later phases. That mighty change in the human mind, which gave birth to the Reformation and to the revival of ancient literature, fell precisely at the time when the perfection of the Italian art in painting and sculpture, with other causes, rendered Italy omnipotent over European taste. And there a pedantry, which to us seems incredible in its puerile absurdity, led men to the conviction that the art of the Romans—a race at no time capable of any spontaneous or real Fine Art—was the one rule and law for the Christendom of 1500 years later. Incredible to us, we have said . . . in all matters but in Architecture. For in Architecture, that imitation of Roman work, best known through the name of Palladio, reigns in every capital and city of Europe. No one would deny that great genius and inordinate expense have given us a few buildings in which the Italian style has been led to graceful or noble results, when in the exceptionally-gifted hands of San Micheli or Scamozzi, Wren or Chambers, of the architects of the original Louvre or the original Whitehall. But no one can possibly assert that the style which has filled London with the dead monotony of Gower or Harley Streets, or the pale commonplace of Belgravia, Tyburnia, and Kensington—which has pierced Paris and Madrid with the feeble frivolities of the Rue Rivoli and the Strada de Toledo—which has in ten thousand towns substituted baldness and bareness and blackness for the colour and charm and life of Gothic, the square hole for the traceried window or clustered doorway, the square outline for the pinnacled shrine,—unable to employ the commonest material, and costly, beyond the reach of all but the very rich, when employing the finer——In a practical country, and an age which has renewed the popular love for art, is it needful to waste words on the conclusion?

To state the plain facts should be sufficient: we have seen that the Roman style is a heterogeneous and mechanical formation, put together from foreign styles by a tasteless race, by which they were misunderstood, and arrested by political causes before it had reached that stage of unity which alone gives a soul to art. This style, restored in part from ruins, in part from the treatises of Roman theorists, was applied in later times, when society was altered, to the palaces and churches of Italy and France, during a century of the

deepest social degradation,—to minister to the luxury of Francis or Borgia, or supply temples for the infidel superstitions of Leo and Julius. It was never treated as suitable for ordinary life: it cannot be rendered suitable for it. Unable to condescend to a cottage, it triumphs as the decoration of the stage. **Palladian, Renaissance, Italian, Louis Quatorze, Louis Quinze**, whatever name it bears, it is still but the copy of a copied architecture—a galvanized pedantry.

Architecture such as this can have no hold on men's hearts; vulgar pride or learned connoisseurship are the only tastes it appeals to. And from its fatal domination has arisen an evil worse than the frozen formality it fosters; wherever this Palladianism has spread, with it spreads like a canker that dead indifference to the art, which will never be cured whilst men live in houses and meet in buildings which can give them no real pleasure. But when once a practical, intelligible, and beautiful style arises, the natural delight in Architecture our race has always taken, in healthy days of taste, will arise with it, and the cold arrogant spectres of the bastard Roman pass beyond the reach of contempt itself. Nor should it be fancied, that to return to former excellence involves that copied art which will never be other than lifeless. Gothic, fair as it was, never reached its full development; we have but to take up the thread which the dilettante dropped, and carry out, with far greater means, the style invented for us by our neighbours and our countrymen.

The examples before quoted have been mostly selected from churches,—buildings which both invited the greatest skill and have survived most frequently to modern days. But the peculiar glory of Gothic in all its phases is, that it is equally adapted to every architectural requirement of human life. No other style is at once so high, and so humble; so rigid in obedience to its purpose, or so free in arrangement and detail. What was done of old in the minster, was done in the street; the style of the Country was the style of the Town. This was not an architecture, as those of Egypt and of Greece, reserved in its purity for religion; not as that of Rome, incapable of descending without loss of essential character to private dwellings; but like the 'common sun, the air, the skies,' suitable at once to the church and the palace, the factory and the town hall, cottage and castle; taking each material and carrying to the utmost its capabilities, from the marble in its snowy slab, or purple-veined tablet, to the earth of the field, or the rubble of the quarry; at home no less in shops and alleys, than where the manor-house lights up the landscape with

its gray or russet gables, or the valley-side chapel stands like a chased tabernacle of precious workmanship, amongst rude rocks and the frowning mountain walls of nature. And it should specially be noted, that Gothic alone has been able to beautify the dwellings of the Poor. These are no idle phrases; they are strictly exemplified during all the centuries of the round and pointed Gothic; nor, so far as we know, has any other style been equal to the same universality of service. It is not on remote or elaborate or antiquarian reasons that its excellence rests: **Gothic** is simply the one style which, by the circumstances of its development, has united in itself all the best constructive and the best ornamental forms of the world's inventions in Architecture. From the lowliest offices of use to the loftiest majesty of loveliness, this noble art has shown herself equal to the occasion; unrestricted by varieties of climate, nay, finding in them only additional opportunities for beauty and for convenience; at once the most economical in means, the most varied in adaptabilities, the most intelligible and exquisite in results. It is no fine figure to say, that by ten thousand proofs Gothic has stamped itself on the fair face of Europe as the Architecture of Heaven, and the Architecture of Home. Man's requirements in the province of building do not substantially vary; they are amongst the things 'that have been, and will be again.' In this matter, then, on which side is Common Sense? Why seek impossible new forms, or repeat styles which are bastard, or lifeless, or unpractical,—whilst men of like passions and blood with ourselves have solved the problem once, perfectly, and for ever?









